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ABSTRACT

This document provides descriptions of 23 exemplary schools chosen for recognition by the Secondary School Recognition Program (SSRP) in 1985. The schools, from the mid-Atlantic region of the United States (District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), were featured at the 1985 conference, "Conversations on Excellence in Education," organized by Research for Better Schools (RBS). The 23 schools demonstrated high levels of success in meeting their students' needs and exhibited achievement in the following areas: leadership, staff relationships, communications, school climate, curricula, instruction, parent involvement, program consistency, and coordination. The highlights and future plans of each school's program are described. (LMI)

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The 1983-84 Secondary School Recognition Program

Conversations on Excellence in Education

A Regional Leadership Conference

Presented by
Secretary William J. Bennett
United States
Department of Education

Funded by the
National Institute
of Education

Sponsored by
Research for Better Schools, Inc.

Rosemont, Pennsylvania
May 11, 1985

EA 026 147

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MESSAGE TO CONFERENCE

Education has come under close scrutiny over the last two years from various national, state, and citizen groups, all concerned with helping schools identify ways of achieving "educational excellence." In support of this concern, the Secretary of Education initiated the Secondary Schools Recognition Program.

This is the second year that exemplary schools across the nation have been chosen for recognition. The 23 schools featured at this "Conversations on Excellence in Education" conference are examples of outstanding schools. They have demonstrated high levels of success in meeting the needs of their students. They have also exhibited the attributes of success — leadership, staff relationships, communications, school climate, curricula, instruction, parent involvement, program consistency and coordination — which the research suggests are characteristics of effective schools.

Research for Better Schools (RBS) is pleased to act as the organizer of the conference at the request of the U.S. Department of Education and the National Institute of Education. As one of seven federally-supported regional educational laboratories, RBS has had as its mission for the past 19 years conducting research, development, and assistance programs which help educators in the Mid-Atlantic region improve the effectiveness of their schools and classrooms. RBS wishes to extend its congratulations to the 23 recognized schools.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our special thanks to the Lower Merion School District, especially to Superintendent James Pugh, who agreed to host the conference, Mrs. Adeline Cortese, for her assistance with logistics, and Mr. Jack Koser, Food Service Director, who made the arrangements required for using the facility and for preparing the luncheon. To Bala Cynwyd Middle School staff, especially Dr. Robert Cummings, Principal, for his assistance with preparations at Academy Building. To Harriton High School staff, especially Dr. Ellis Hirshman, Principal and Dr. William Loue, Assistant Principal, we also extend thanks for their assistance in making the school available to us and in helping us with the countless arrangements for the day.

Special thanks are offered to the following RBS staff and staff associates who diligently wrote/edited profiles, and assisted with conference arrangements and production: Diane Goldstein, Doris Harris, John Hopkins, Loretta Margulies, Gretchen McCann, Richard McCann, Malachi O'Connor, Sally Peterson, and Ullik Rouk.

Finally, our thanks to Appalachia Educational Laboratory for the camera-ready profile cover design and headers, to Theresa Booth for all other graphics and layout, and to Graphic Impressions of America, Inc. for excellent service in typesetting and printing on a tight deadline.

Linda M. Lange
Conference Coordinator

• THE 1983-84 SECONDARY SCHOOL RECOGNITION PROGRAM •

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ALICE DEAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Washington, D.C.

"Deal has established its reputation as an institution which offers academic preparation at all levels, extra-curricular activities for diverse interests and abilities, and a clean, safe, comfortable environment. Students from the neighborhood community who used to enter private schools after sixth grade now enroll at Deal. The number of applications from around the District for special permission to attend Deal has increased." Principal

Alice Deal Junior High School is part of the District of Columbia Public Schools and serves students from the northwest Washington, D.C. community, students bused in from the Mt. Pleasant area, and students from throughout the city who attend by special permission. It is one of 16 junior high schools in the D.C. school system, which also has 11 middle schools, 23 high schools, and 121 elementary schools.

Deal's enrollment of 953 students in grades 7-9 is characterized by racial, cultural, and socio-economic diversity. Students come from 36 different elementary schools and over 20 foreign countries. Approximately 50% of the students are black, 30% are white, 15% are Hispanic, and 5% are Asian. About 23% of the students come from low-income families.

The Deal faculty includes 53 classroom teachers, two subject specialists, one library/media specialist, and four counselors. The staff is supported by three teacher aides, one security officer, four clerical staff, and 10 food service personnel. There are three administrators: the principal and two assistants.

Respect and High Expectations

The premise at Alice Deal is that everyone in the building has worth as a person and has something to offer. With such a diverse school population, the key ingredient in the school's atmosphere is respect. The school's success is built on four elements: policy, order, consistency, and high expectations. Everyone works to foster feelings of loyalty and belonging.

The administration respects the abilities, integrity, and opinions of the school staff and provides the leadership to insure that every phase of program responsibility is carried out. Teachers recognize and understand the problems faced by the administration and are sensitive to the varying needs and abilities of their students. They set high expectations consistent with their students' achievement levels and encourage them to obtain the maximum benefit from the many cultures represented in the school community. The students learn to work and play together by accepting differences and exploring similarities.

Instructional Program

Alice Deal is unique among District junior high schools in that its students, as a whole, traditionally score above national norms in reading and mathematics. Nevertheless, a significant segment of its student body needs substantial remedial work. An interdisciplinary team of administrators, counselors, and support staff meets once a month to ensure students are taking the most appropriate program.

The school's instructional program is based on the D.C. Public Schools' competency-based instructional program, which includes activities and assessments for a hierarchy of learning objectives. The Deal faculty developed a course description booklet for each grade and a syllabus for each class which are used by students and parents in deciding on a course of study. Guides similar to these have now been adopted by the D.C. Public Schools.

All students are required to take English, math, social studies, science, physical education, art, and music. Electives include foreign language, instrumental

music, woodshop/mechanical drawing, foods/clothing, typing, consumer fundamentals, and minorities. Accelerated classes are offered in all required courses. Approximately 34% of the students are enrolled in accelerated English, 28% in math, 26% in foreign language, 18% in science, and 11% in social studies.

The D.C. Public Schools has an intensive remedial program for students who need to work on reading and mathematics skills. Deal has expanded its remedial program to include 7th grade geography and 8th grade U.S. history. In addition, five days a week, it operates reading and math laboratories which are staffed by former elementary school teachers offering an individualized program.

All students are encouraged to exceed the basic requirements by completing special projects related to unit objectives and by participating in special activities. Examples of such activities include Deal's Science Fair, which involves nearly half of the students; Deal's History Fair, which involves about 15% of the students; the interscholastic Latin Bowl; and the Shakespearean Festival, a performing arts competition with other schools.

Involved Students

Deal has an active student council which consists of officers elected on a school-wide basis and representatives elected from each of the homerooms. The council plans assemblies, maintains the student store, produces an annual talent show, conducts holiday food drives, sponsors sports tournaments, arranges "garden parties" to plant and maintain the grounds in front of the school, offers trips to special events and recreational facilities, and holds dances.

During the school year, the council officers meet one morning a week. All students are invited to weekly after-school meetings of the entire council. Minutes of these meetings are distributed to the faculty and administration. Each June, the council holds an overnight leadership training seminar for both old and newly elected council members to evaluate the previous year's programs and activities. Over the summer, the next year's calendar of activities is planned.

Deal offers over 30 co-curricular activities, including such sports as basketball, volleyball, and soccer; clubs, including Latin, chess, physical science, international affairs and culture, computers, photography, math, skiing, and horseback riding; publications, including the school newspaper and yearbook; and drama and music activities, such as the chorus and the music makers. These activities meet before and after school, and during a regularly scheduled activity period. The activity period was established to allow students who live outside the attendance area to participate in more activities and to develop a greater sense of identification with the school.

Students also participate in the community by electing representatives to the neighborhood planning council and serving on its board; testifying at city council hearings; contributing to community horticulture projects; and working with senior citizens, the handicapped, and elementary school students.

Administration-Faculty-Parent Teamwork

Deal's success may be attributed to a desire on the part of administrators, staff, and parents to provide students with the best possible educational experiences, and on their willingness to put forth the necessary effort to accomplish that goal.

The administration uses a team approach. Though each has specific responsibilities for certain administrative functions, the assistant principals share in planning and implementing programs, monitoring and soliciting teacher feedback, and teacher evaluations.

The dedication of Deal teachers and staff goes beyond traditional requirements. Teachers are available before and after school, and during their lunch periods to offer assistance to students. They take every opportunity to improve the school program. Examples of improvements growing out of initially informal meetings include the creation of an 8th grade English/History Team; an accelerated three-year course for unusually gifted 7th grade math students; additional units in general math to support the general science curriculum; the incorporation of a test-taking skills program in all curricular areas; and a staff development workshop on stress.

Parent participation and support has been an essential part of Deal's progress toward excellence. The PTA raises up to $10,000 a year for school and classroom needs such as microscopes and other science equipment, books, audio-visual materials, uniforms, the school newspaper, and improvements to the auditorium. The PTA also pays for classified ads for open faculty positions and lobbies for full funding of public education.

The Future

Deal believes success breeds success. The school's initial goals were attractive classrooms and uniformity in what it taught. The staff would like to see 80% of its students master 80% of the instructional objectives. The school will continue to give equal emphasis to the constant task of developing a climate of mutual respect among all students.

For More Information Contact:
Alice Deal Junior High School
Fort Drive & Nebraska Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016
202/282-0100

This profile was prepared by Research for Better Schools, Inc. (RBS), 444 North Third Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123, using information supplied by the subject school, and using the written comments and observations made by the Department of Education site observer who visited the school. This conference was conducted by RBS and funded through a grant from the National Institute of Education.

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ALLENTOWN CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Allentown, Pennsylvania

"This school has at its roots the principles of the Catholic faith. They strive to prepare youth for the world by rooting them in their faith. They do. They voice that they are concerned about the personal worth of each student. They are. They indicate that they are there to support the gifted and the weak. They do. They want to share the limitlessness of truth. It is shared. The evidence is everywhere. In the classes, in conversations, in writing, in hallways, in unspoken words!" Site Visit Report

Allentown Central Catholic High School is a co-educational, private school in the Catholic Diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania. It is an urban, inner-city school serving families with a median income of $15,000 a year. Tuition at Central Catholic is $960 a year. Tuition income covers only 60% of the annual budget and the school must raise an additional $250,000 a year to cover its operating costs.

Central Catholic has a student population of 900 in grades 9-12. Over 86.5% of the students are white, 5% are black, 5% are Hispanic, .5% are Asian, and 3% are other minorities. Approximately 20% of the students come from low-income families and 10% receive financial aid for tuition. Over 80% of Central Catholic's graduates enter a two or four-year college program, 12% enter the military or other vocational training program, and 7% find full-time employment.

Central Catholic maintains a teacher/pupil ratio of 1:16. Its faculty includes 54 classroom teachers, two counselors, four library/media specialists, and two special services personnel. They are supported by three food service workers, four clerical staff, and 13 buildings and grounds personnel (10 part-time). There are three administrators, the principal and two assistants. Despite a starting salary of $9,750 for lay teachers, the staff is stable, meets state certification requirements, and most have Master's degrees.

Sense of Mission

Central Catholic's mission is to challenge each student to develop to his/her fullest potential in a stable school environment which is based on Christian principles as clarified by the teaching of the Catholic Church. It seeks to create relationships among faculty and students which enable each individual to realize his/her own dignity as a free, responsible, valued child of God and a productive, worthwhile, caring member of society. The faculty endeavors to develop genuine scholarship at all levels by stimulating critical thinking, fostering a spirit of inquiry, and promoting a creative attitude which relishes the struggle for understanding and discovers the limitlessness of truth.

This philosophy was developed by Central Catholic's administration and faculty and is re-examined periodically as part of the school's yearly evaluation process. In addition, the staff and students select a theme to guide the school each year—for example, "Faith, Love, Spirit, Service"—and develop specific goals and objectives to which all are committed. Central Catholic also has a calling card for parents. It reads, "Your most precious possession is also ours—your child."

Positive Spirit

The positive spirit fostered at Central Catholic is based on the Roman Catholic tradition of Christian faith. The doctrinal tradition is taught through mandatory theological courses. Annual day-long retreats are built into the school calendar to allow students to reflect on their faith and its daily practice. Seven priest-teachers provide sacramental reconciliation and counsel to students who wish to address their moral status, problems, and growth. Each week a faculty member addresses the student body over the PA system on a theme guided by the school goal.

Central Catholic students visibly value their faith. They are attentive and reverent at school religious services and a large percentage receive Holy Communion at school masses. Students requested and now have more penance services during

the school year. Classes begin with student-led prayers and additional school-wide prayers are held every morning and afternoon.

The students demonstrate this positive spirit in many ways. Honesty, respect, and good will permeate the school. Incidents of theft and cheating are rare, and ridicule, harassment, and excessive teasing are all but non-existent. Students also show a willingness to serve. About 100 students work with an adjacent hospital, and students head the annual Thanksgiving and Christmas drives. Even more students serve right at the school, especially in one-to-one tutoring.

The faculty displays the same spirit. In the "Adopt a Student" program, each teacher makes a concerted effort to get to know six students with whom he or she might not otherwise have contact. The faculty is available to students after school. Whenever possible they commend their students publicly. They live in the same neighborhoods as the students and welcome them into their homes.

Central Catholic has a formal Code of Conduct which stresses social responsibility and provides direction for the small percentage of students who require it. Discipline is handled primarily through the Director of Student Affairs who strives to be "firm, fond, frank, and fair." When necessary, students "progress" through various disciplinary levels involving mandatory guidance and behavior modification contracts.

Challenge — The "Aedifice Complex"

One of the biggest challenges Central Catholic faced in recent years was the school's decaying buildings in an inner city location with limited funds available for renovation. This challenge became known as the "aedifice complex."

The school embarked upon a fund-raising effort for renovations in addition to its regular fund-raising for operational costs, enlisting the assistance of parents and community groups. The result was several hundred thousand dollars—in money, material, and donated time—which enabled Central Catholic to take on a whole new appearance and atmosphere.

The entire building was painted, floors and roofs repaired, the chemistry lab renovated and outfitted, the heating system modernized, and sprinkler systems, sound systems, and a burglar alarm system were installed. In all, over 15 major categories of repairs were made.

Enriching the Program

The faculty recently completed a two-year intensive revision of the complete course of studies. Each course was analyzed and all objectives were totally rewritten. Faculty commitment to this effort is evident in that the work was completed without additional recompense even though much out-of-school time was necessary.

The Enriched Program, a series of advanced courses for gifted students, was developed to enhance the school's academic program. As part of the curriculum, Allentown College of St. Francis provides instructors for six semester-long courses in the building during the school day. It is now possible for seniors in the program to earn 18 college credits by the time they graduate. Approximately 16% of Central Catholic students are enrolled in honors English, 22% in math, 12% in social studies, 8% in science, and 18% in foreign language.

On the Riverside Tests of Achievement and Proficiency, Central Catholic students score at the 88th to the 98th percentile. In the last three years, Central Catholic has had two National Merit finalists, five semi-finalists, and 18 commended scholars as well as numerous other awards.

More Effective Use of Time

When the school adopted modular scheduling several years ago, unsupervised students were free to go anywhere in the building during their study modules. As a result, an undisciplined atmosphere developed. Central Catholic now has a format which schedules students into classes or resource centers for each period of the day. Students may select where they will do individual work, but their only free time is during the lunch module—a period of twenty-two minutes.

Under the new schedule, each department is released from classroom instruction once every seven days so teachers can meet with individual students. This day is also used for curriculum planning and department staff meetings. There is a typed agenda for department meetings and minutes are distributed to all other departments in the school. The effective use of these planning days has created an informed flexibility that pervades the operation of the school.

Monthly faculty meetings are now used strictly for in-service. The nitty-gritty details of school operation and general policy issues are discussed at the administration's monthly meeting with the Advisory Board. This Board is composed of department heads, the director of the library/media center, guidance counselors, and the curriculum specialist. Teachers are welcome to attend these meetings.

The Future

At the end of the year, the faculty evaluates the performance of the principal and the administrative staff. The Student Council solicits criticisms and suggestions from the students, develops a critical assessment of the year, and offers suggestions for improvement. At the final faculty meeting, the entire group determines the school goal and objectives for the next year. The principal considers this year-end evaluation by faculty and students to be the catalyst for all the good things that happen at Central Catholic.

He says, "We must try harder if we are to accomplish even part of our lofty goals . . . Any inferior effort on our part is not satisfactory. Problems we have. Excuses are not offered. Mistakes are made. Effort, however, is the rule, not the exception."

For More Information Contact:
Allentown Central Catholic High School
4th & Chew Streets
Allentown, PA 18102
215/437-4601

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BALA CYNWYD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania

"The climate of the Bala Cynwyd Middle School is one of purposeful teaching and learning. Teachers go about the purpose of educating youngsters with the friendly diligence and caring that is expected of them from a highly motivated and educated community. The students respond to this motivation by striving for excellence in their academic work, as well as in all of their other activities. The efforts of teachers and students are reflected in the high achievement test results, as well as in the many honors that have been bestowed upon our school." Principal

Bala Cynwyd Middle School is located in Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, a "Main Line" suburb of Philadelphia. It is one of two middle schools in the Lower Merion School District, which also has five elementary schools, two high schools, and serves a community of 64,147. Bala Cynwyd was restructured as a middle school, and greatly enlarged as a result of a 1980 district reorganization.

Bala Cynwyd now serves a student population of 800 in grades 6-8. Approximately 91% of the students are white, 6.4% are black, 2.3% are Asian, and a small number are Hispanic and Native American. Slightly under 4% of the students come from low-income families.

Bala Cynwyd's faculty includes 58 classroom teachers (one part-time), four subject specialists (one part-time), one library/media specialist, and three counselors. The faculty is supported by six teacher aides, a part-time social worker, six clerical staff, and six food service workers. There are three administrators: the principal and two assistant principals. The majority of the teachers have master's degrees, and five staff members have doctorates.

High Quality Academic Program

Bala Cynwyd maintains a high quality academic program while meeting the needs of a diverse student population representing a range of abilities, interests, levels of achievement, and maturity.

The program requires students to develop competence in the basics—mathematics, English, history, and science—and in music, art, wood and metal shop, sewing, cooking, typing, study and library skills, writing, and computer literacy. Every student also takes either one of four foreign languages (French, German, Spanish, or Latin), or reading.

Bala Cynwyd deals with the varying needs of students by assigning them individually. Each student is assigned to an interdisciplinary team for English, math, science, and social studies. Each team provides instruction at three levels, enriched, regular, and remedial. All levels cover the same basic course content, but differ in the amount of enrichment and stress on basic skills. Very few students are in the same level in all subjects. A student may be in a regular science course, a remedial English course, and an enriched history course. Students may also move from one level to another during a school year.

Bala Cynwyd emphasizes enrichment rather than acceleration for high achieving students. About 16% of the school's students are enrolled in enrichment level classes in English, social studies, and science. Accelerated classes are provided in math (23% of the students) and foreign language (61%). In addition, mentally gifted students (12.5%) are scheduled for small classes two periods a week to work on a variety of challenging projects.

Students with learning disabilities or social and emotional problems (12.5% of the students) are assigned to the guided learning program which provides instruction in the basic subjects in classes of 7 to 12 students. These students are assigned individually and may take a portion of their program in regular classes. Most are also assigned to a resource room, where they can get additional help.

The primary purpose of every remedial and special education class is to remedy skill deficiencies so that a student can move to a regular level class. The school has been remarkably successful in achieving this purpose. While 18% of sixth graders are scheduled into remedial or guided learning classes, this number drops to 8% by grade eight.

Bala Cynwyd puts emphasis on making maximum use of the school day. There are no study halls or "activity periods" in any grade. In addition, the order of classes is rotated each week to insure that students involved in activities away from the school will not repeatedly miss the same classes.

Planning for the middle school program prompted a review of the entire curriculum. Half the school staff visited other middle schools, and many worked on paid summer committees. Plans which outline goals, objectives, content, and resources have been developed for each course in the school. Course content is reviewed annually by the teachers and administrators. An in-depth evaluation of each program area is performed on a five-year cycle to ensure proper sequence and distribution of content among various courses.

On the Metropolitan Achievement Test, Bala Cynwyd sixth graders scored a mean grade equivalent 2.2 years above the national norm; seventh grade students scored 3.1 years above; and eighth grade students scored 4 years above.

Extensive Co-Curricular Program

Bala Cynwyd's co-curricular program provides the opportunity for students to explore their interests through a range of activities.

The student government, composed of elected representatives from each homeroom, plans dances, a spirit week, apparel sales, a yearbook signing party, fund-raising drives, and some assemblies. Each year the sixth grade representatives plan an orientation program for incoming fifth graders and their parents.

The instrumental music program has seven different groups involving about 25% of the school's students who perform in over 40 programs a year. The jazz band has been honored by invitations to perform at local and national conventions, and has toured Romania. The vocal music program involves over 15% of all students in two choirs and two barbershop octets.

Bala Cynwyd students produce one or two plays a year which they perform for the community. The English department sponsors a public speaking contest and a spelling bee which involves the entire student body each year. Other activities include the yearbook, the newspaper, the literary magazine, and the school store.

Over 80% of the students participate in an intramural program which pits homerooms against each other in flag football, gymnastics, floor hockey, and chess. In addition, Bala Cynwyd has 22 interscholastic sports teams for seventh and eighth graders.

Bala Cynwyd has a yearly gymnastics show, talent show, and awards assemblies to recognize students for their particular contributions. There is an Arts Festival each year in which projects made in the fine and practical arts classes are displayed for parents, teachers, and students.

Interdisciplinary Teams

Bala Cynwyd's interdisciplinary teams have been especially important in enabling the school to match the individual needs of students with appropriate programs. Working with the counselors, the reading specialists, and the teachers of gifted and learning disabled students, the teams provide a networking structure for focusing upon individual students.

The interdisciplinary teams meet weekly to discuss instructional strategies for individual students and groups. Grade level departments meet weekly to exchange instructional ideas and coordinate the curriculum both within the grade and with the rest of the school. School-wide departments meet on in-service days to discuss curriculum, instruction, and materials in their subject areas.

There is also an elected faculty advisory council which meets bi-weekly with the principal to discuss all aspects of the school. These meetings are open to all staff members.

The entire staff was involved in Project IMPACT for two years following the reorganization. This federally-funded program was designed to increase the skill and sensitivity of the staff in working with students who have learning disabilities. The project began a method of communication between support staff and team teachers that has facilitated mainstreaming and changed attitudes toward special education students.

Parent Involvement

Bala Cynwyd serves a community where academic performance is highly prized and parents are very demanding of the school system. Parents have expressed their support of the team structure that enables teachers to focus on individual student needs. They also feel the school's co-curricular program contributes to their children's sense of responsibility and self-concept.

The Home and School Association contributes to the school by assisting with public relations and grade level activities, organizing volunteer resource people, publishing a newsletter and a school directory, enlisting library volunteers, holding a new parents tea and an open house, and by raising funds. The Association also organizes a teacher appreciation dinner and an eighth grade recognition ceremony. Once a year, the Association holds a dinner for the senior citizens who help to introduce students who are new American citizens to Thanksgiving traditions.

Parents also serve on long-range planning committees, as well as on committees for caring parents, special education, school board, interschool council, and fine arts. Individual parents serve as tutors in the school's English as a second language program, and as resource people in classrooms.

The Future

Bala Cynwyd will continue to face declining enrollment. The administration is committed to maintaining curriculum offerings, especially foreign language, and to curriculum improvement, especially in mathematics.

For More Information Contact:
Bala Cynwyd Middle School
510 Bryn Mawr Avenue
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
215/664-4500

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CAESAR RODNEY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Camden, Delaware

"The school climate fosters concentration on the academic tasks through genuine concern, mutual respect, and conscious effort. There is a relaxed sense of order, a minimum of disruption, a well-organized and academically focused curriculum. There is a delicate balance that works for us because we want it to work, because we work together toward common goals in a cordial, unified relationship. The atmosphere of respect among the students and staff creates a climate where dedication and concern flow; expectations are clear and well-defined; and academic learning takes place in a comfortable, well-disciplined environment." Principal

Caesar Rodney Senior High School serves the rural community of Camden, Delaware (pop. 30,000), and is part of the Caesar Rodney School District which also includes two junior high schools and nine elementary schools. In an effort to deal with the problems of declining enrollment, Caesar Rodney students were recently merged with students and staff of Dover Air Force Base High School.

Caesar Rodney has an enrollment of 1,536 in grades 9-12. Approximately 77% of the students are white, 17.5% are black, 3% are Asian, 1.5% are Hispanic, and fewer than 1% are Native American. Fifteen percent of the students come from low-income families. About 60% of Caesar Rodney graduates go on to some form of post-secondary education and 40% move into the working world. Thus, the school provides both college preparatory and vocational training programs.

The faculty includes 84 classroom teachers (three part-time), two subject area specialists, one library/media specialist, and six counselors. The faculty is supported by four teacher aides (one part-time), 17 food service personnel, and six clerks/secretaries. There are five administrators: the principal, and four assistant principals.

Business-Like Atmosphere

Caesar Rodney has developed a business-like atmosphere. Expectations are clear; students are to dress and behave as "ladies and gentlemen," and teachers are to be reliable and enthusiastic as they help to set and achieve a tone of excellence in the school. Independence and responsibility are encouraged. Respect for all students, teachers, visitors, and school property is emphasized. There is a mutual understanding of the role each must play to be successful.

There are no bells; teachers begin and dismiss classes in a way to promote a smooth operation. Everyone is expected to be on time. This system has created an atmosphere where "teachers can teach and students can learn."

Cooperative Environment

Caesar Rodney seeks to create a "large school with a small school atmosphere." Its informal motto is "Everybody is somebody," and the administration works to bond staff, students, and community in a common effort.

The administrative staff is highly visible throughout the day. The principals spend 80% of their time in the classrooms, the halls, the cafeteria, the gymnasium, and on the athletic fields, providing accessibility and support to both faculty and students. The desire by all to do well is highlighted and sharpened by their presence.

A good relationship between administration and faculty is an ongoing concern. Foreseeing potential problems and addressing them before they materialize is a priority. The administration meets regularly with the Liaison Committee, with department chairpersons, and with individual teachers to discuss instructional and disciplinary needs, both immediate and long term. The school has had only one grievance filed in five years. The administration attributes this to mutual understanding and a genuine cooperative effort by all involved in the decision-making process.

Counselors are integral to the school program and see it as directed toward total human development. They spend 70% of their time with students and work especially with disruptive students. The crisis counselor's role is to build student self-esteem, self-respect, and a positive

self-image to maximize student potential. He supervises the Peer Counseling Program, which involves students in helping other students.

The student council, consisting of elected representatives from each class, the president of each class, and a faculty adviser, functions as a bridge between the staff and the student body. Each class has its own council to handle class affairs.

Academic Program

Caesar Rodney provides both a strong academic program for college-bound students and a basic skills/vocational training program for students who plan to enter the job market after graduation. Post graduate follow-up surveys, as well as local advisory councils of business and community members, provide input in planning course content. The results of annual standardized tests provide additional information for curricular decisions.

Each department reviews its own program, goals, and materials on a five-year cycle. After this comprehensive study, teachers present their proposals to the school board. When the proposals are adopted, teachers write guides which contain objectives, content, materials/activities, and statements covering grading and minimum expectations. All of this work is done on a voluntary basis outside of regular school hours, and 100% of the teachers participate.

Many special programs have resulted from this work. The talented and gifted program for grades 10-12 is an individualized mentor program. Students work under contractual agreements with professionals in their chosen field of interest. Students have organized a video company and made original video tapes; organized and managed the children's section of the Governor's Open House; formed crafts and computer companies and marketed their products; written articles on local history and folklore; and interned in state offices.

The peer teaching program enables students interested in a teaching career to gain first-hand experience under the guidance of a classroom teacher at a school in the district. Peer teachers also organize and assist in special education activities.

The school's Basic Skills Center serves as a model throughout the state. The center assists students who need remedial work to meet the state's competency requirements in the basic skills; provides a self-tutoring program for SAT preparation; tutors handicapped, foreign born, and exchange students; trains teachers on the use of computers; and teaches programming to upper level math students.

Caesar Rodney also provides mainstreaming for mentally handicapped students. A staff team, which includes the student, evaluates potential on an individual basis. The main aim is to provide those skills necessary for employment and basic living. The program has been successful in mainstreaming students into business, agriculture, home economics, mathematics, and social studies classes. Teachers of mainstreamed students have continuous in-service as the staff works together to improve the education of special needs students.

Student achievement is recognized in many ways at Caesar Rodney. All teachers set aside special areas in their classrooms to display students' outstanding academic work. The Hall of Fame, located in a main corridor outside the library, displays the pictures of outstanding students in each of 90 categories. Honor Rolls are posted quarterly in the front lobby on the Honor Board. Honor Roll letters are sent to qualified students.

Results of the Delaware Educational Assessment Program show that Caesar Rodney students score consistently above national norms and are among the top students in the state. In 1983, the graduating class won 92 scholarships totalling $718,700, and claimed two National Merit Scholar finalists, a Presidential Scholar, eight military academy appointments, and five students in the Performing Arts Division of the Governor's School for Excellence. Caesar Rodney students routinely garner awards in music, industrial arts, agriculture, foreign languages, and the Special Olympics.

Community Support

Caesar Rodney is the focal point of community activities. The school and the community are mutually supportive. Athletics and music have active booster associations which raise money for these programs, plan trips, and provide chaperones. Advisory councils of parents and students assist in each vocational education area. The mentor program for gifted and talented students involves innumerable business and community people. The senior awards assembly is coordinated by both the school and the community.

The community also helps individual students with service activities. Students devote countless hours to the Special Olympics, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, the Governor's Fair, the Governor's Prayer Breakfast, the Toys for Tots program, Kent General Hospital, and the Kent County Parks and Recreation Department. Student groups also visit shut-ins, tutor students, collect and repair furniture and toys, and deliver food baskets to the needy.

The school facility is used for the Governor's Prayer Breakfast, civic club meetings, conventions and shareholders' meetings, and classes given by various groups. The athletic fields are used by local baseball leagues and the Special Olympics, as well as by other groups.

The Future

Despite the merger with Dover Air Force Base High School, Caesar Rodney continues to be faced with a decline in enrollment. In addition, increasing costs have resulted in cutbacks in materials, supplies, and money for substitutes; larger classes in some instances; and an inability to provide salaries comparable with other districts in the state. School and district leadership are seeking to address these problems in ways which do not detrimentally affect the staff and the program. For example, teachers now provide substitute coverage for one another when substitute money is low, bring in their own materials and supplies, and share textbooks. Students take care to conserve the materials that are available and have initiated fund-raising activities to maintain activities which would otherwise be discontinued.

For More Information Contact:
Caesar Rodney Senior High School
239 Old North Road
Camden, DE 19934
302/697-2161

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• THE 1983-84 SECONDARY SCHOOL RECOGNITION PROGRAM •

Conversations on Excellence in Education

A Regional Leadership Conference Presented by
Secretary William J. Bennett, United States Department of Education
May 11, 1985 • Rosemont, Pennsylvania

CHRISTIANA HIGH SCHOOL

Newark, Delaware

"Christiana is a turn-around school—from great social upheaval to a school intent on reaching toward educational excellence." Site Visit Report

"After five years of court-ordered desegregation, the school can point with pride to a considerable number of accomplishments. Those associated with this school and community identified problems and worked out solutions in a cooperative, peaceful fashion, keeping in mind that the only purpose for this school's existence is to serve students." Principal

Christiana High School originally served the primarily white suburban community of Newark, Delaware. Then, under a 1978 court-ordered desegregation plan, the public school systems of Wilmington and 10 contiguous suburban districts were dissolved and reorganized into the New Castle County School System.

Following this reorganization, Christiana faced a series of crises—a six-week teacher strike, student disruptions rooted in racial tensions, and a high turnover of administrative leaders. The district was reorganized again, this time establishing four smaller districts, but continuing the mandate of integration. Christiana is now part of the Christina School District which serves 14,166 homes and has two other high schools, three junior highs, and 15 elementary schools.

Christiana has a student population of 1,358 in grades 9-12. Approximately 75% of the students are white, 24% are black, and 1% are Hispanic. Based on federal lunch program data, about 16% of the students come from low-income families. Over half its graduates go on to a two or four year college after graduation, and about 40% seek full-time employment.

Christiana's faculty includes 79 classroom teachers, two basic skills specialists, one educational diagnostician, two library/media specialists (one part-time), four counselors, two student advisors, and a part-time psychologist and speech therapist. The faculty is supported by one teacher aide, two human relations/social workers, six clerical staff, and 14 food service workers (10 part-time). There are five administrators, a principal and four assistants.

Building a Sense of Community

In 1980, a number of serious incidents involving students brought about a potentially explosive level of anxiety and hostility between black and white students. The principal received permission to close the school for a week. During that time, he brought the staff together to hear and resolve their concerns, and together they brought each grade back a day at a time to work in small groups, and hear and resolve their concerns. One evening was devoted to the same process with parents.

Since then, Christiana has worked to create a warm and responsive environment where teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn, where everyone is accepted and respected, but inappropriate behavior is not. A great commitment of time, energy, and training has been made by the entire staff toward this end.

The human relations staff, working jointly with the National Council of Christians and Jews, developed the Socio-Drama Program to train students through improvisational drama to help others understand the process of peaceful problem resolution. The students involved represent all academic, social, and economic backgrounds and are balanced as to race and sex. In one year they made presentations to all the English classes, a neighboring school, shoppers at a mall, employees of the Internal Revenue Service, and a group of corporate executives and state legislators.

Through a peer counseling program, student volunteers representing a cross section of the student body have been trained to work with other students who are experiencing difficulties. They act in crisis situations to resolve conflicts and hold discussion sessions to explore home, drug, or other problems.

The PLUS program (Personal Learning Under Supervision) was designed to reduce out-of-school suspensions and to help students modify negative behavior and attitudes, improve basic skills, keep up with classwork, and develop a positive self-image. In the 1982-83 school year, PLUS served 420 students. Out-of-school suspensions were reduced by 50% and 70% of the students assigned to PLUS were not involved in any disciplinary incidents for the remainder of the year.

Cooperative Planning/ Involvement

Christiana's leadership has now stabilized and its administrative team is considered the strongest in the district. To provide greater accessibility, more immediate decision-making, and greater efficiency, each of the four assistant principals is directly responsible for supervision of specific departments and deals directly with their staffs.

Total school community participation is encouraged. The principal sets yearly goals for the school and communicates them. He promotes professional growth, supports innovative ideas, and acknowledges staff contributions. Faculty meetings and working committees are the primary vehicles for staff input. Leaders of the Student Government Association, elected on a school-wide basis, meet regularly with the principal to present student opinion on issues. A standing committee of administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents study suggestions from every source and draft recommendations for faculty consideration.

Strengthening the Academic Program

In preparation for the Middle States evaluation and a Department of Public Instruction visit, a committee of staff, administrators, students, and parents conducted a self-evaluation and developed school and instructional goals.

Christiana has modified and added new dimensions to its Honors Program. It now provides an inter-disciplinary, three-year sequence (grades 10-12) of courses in English, math, social studies, and science. Students are also expected to take two or more years of foreign language and two semesters of computer courses. Each year, the students organize a science symposium involving local university and community experts. In the culminating activity, students select and develop an original project under the direction of a faculty advisor. Approximately 5% of Christiana students are enrolled in honors English, 10% in math, 4% in social studies, 6% in science, and 4% in foreign language. In 1984, Christiana had its first National Merit finalist in five years and four semi-finalists.

Each department and responsible administrator now review curriculum content and course offerings each year. The district chairpersons for instruction meet three times a year with each department, and one inservice day a year is devoted to articulation of the academic program.

Special Assistance

Delaware requires all students to master specific minimum competencies to receive a high school diploma. Students at Christiana who have not mastered these skills are recommended for basics courses specifically developed to teach and 6 certify these skills. Approximately 14% of the students are enrolled in basic English, 8% in basic math, 14% in basic social studies, and 3% in remedial reading. All students are reviewed annually and three staff are assigned to provide concentrated assistance to students who continue to lack mastery.

A mentor program was developed to identify and provide support to potential drop-outs from Christiana. Thirty-eight staff members have volunteered to work with 60 students and their parents to try to keep these students in school. A drop-out/return program, developed by student services staff, provides an organized plan of recruitment, support, supervision, and contact with students who have already dropped out. In two years, the program has achieved the return of 68 students and two-thirds of them have remained in school.

Emphasis on Career Education

Christiana High School promotes the aspirations of non-college bound students through several programs that prepare young adults to be productive members of the work force. Many students gain entry level positions in the private sector.

The school's business education department has long been recognized in the state for its strong clerical and secretarial curriculum which now includes word processing. The home economics department operates a nursery school as part of its child development program. Students work directly with preschool children and gain experience and understanding in the art of parenting.

In the Jobs for Delaware Graduates program, two full-time staff work with 75 seniors each year to provide work exploration, job placement assistance, and referral services. This joint venture between the private sector and the public schools has placed 82% of the students in full-time jobs after graduation.

The Future

Christiana looks to maintain and expand its services to students as needs are determined. Currently, they are evaluating the math and writing skills programs. They have added a QUEST program for students with a high interest in engineering as well as peer tutoring to assist students having problems with their course work.

For More Information Contact:
Christiana High School
Salem Church Road
Newark, DE 19713
302/454-2123

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CHRISTIAN BROTHERS ACADEMY

Lincroft, New Jersey

"We strive to treat each student as an individual, with unique talents and an unequaled purpose in life. Our fundamental obligation is the education of our students in the principles of good and Christian behavior . . . the faculty seeks to help each student realize his potential and to discover how the principles of Christian behavior apply. This is done in the classroom, through private counseling, liturgies, and the retreat program." Principal

Christian Brothers Academy is a private Catholic preparatory school for boys in the suburban community of Lincroft, New Jersey. Founded in 1959, the Academy is operated by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a religious order devoted to the work of education, in collaboration with lay faculty. Students are selected on the basis of an admissions test, and on elementary school grades and recommendations. Tuition is $2,300 a year.

Christian Academy has an enrollment of 903 in grades 9-12. About 94% of the students are white, 4% are Asian, 1.5% are Hispanic, and .5% are black. Approximately 2% of the students come from low-income families and the same percentage receive financial aid for tuition.

The faculty includes 55 classroom teachers (three part-time), four counselors, three library/media specialists and one part-time special service specialist. The faculty is supported by five food service persons, five clerical staff, and five buildings and grounds personnel. There are three administrators, the principal and two assistants, one in charge of counseling and discipline, the other curriculum and school planning. The Academy's salary scale exceeds that of many public schools, and 73% of the faculty have at least a Master's degree.

Philosophy

Academy's philosophy respects the young man as a person seeking his individual and social growth through the development of all his faculties in a world created and redeemed by God. As a Catholic school, Academy locates itself in the Judeo-Christian tradition and emphasizes the totality and diversity of human life—physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, and domestic and social.

The Academy seeks to develop the students' talents, freedom, and responsibility—in their personal lives and as members of the familial, religious, civic, and world communities. It endeavors to instill an appreciation of America's history, and democratic ideals and processes to enable students to make an intelligent and serious commitment to democracy. As a private school, it has the prerogative of accepting and retaining only those who are able and willing to participate in its curriculum and abide by its code of conduct.

Spiritual Program

Moral development and Christian values are central to the mission of Christian Brothers Academy and are emphasized in both the classroom and the activities sponsored by the Office of Campus Ministry. Academy strives to treat each student as an individual and to help him to realize his potential.

All students are required to take a four-year course in religious studies which includes the history, doctrines, practices, and ethics of the Roman Catholic Church and other religious traditions. Academy believes that prayer plays an important part in the development of conscience, and each day class begins with a prayer emphasizing key ideas from the Gospel.

The Office of Campus Ministry, which includes a full-time campus minister, provides further opportunities for the students' spiritual development. Its program includes Liturgical planning and

assistance, learning and practicing meditation, prayer groups, Bible study, Christian leadership, Eucharistic ministry, and sacramental preparation. Both staff and students participate in religious retreats once a year.

Social Responsibility

While each student at Christian Brothers Academy is treated respectfully as an individual, in turn he is expected to behave as a Christian gentleman. Both the religion department and the Office of Campus Ministry help the student to develop personal freedom and responsibility and a greater concern for others.

The Campus Minister directs a variety of community service programs, involving students in peer ministry; Hand-in-Hand; MS Word Encounter; Crop Walk; Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas drives; and fund-raising for organizations such as St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

Academy seniors broaden their social awareness through a class in Christian service. The course involves classroom preparation; service work in hospitals, retirement homes, and other organizations; and analysis of the experience. An elective course, it has recently been expanded to accommodate the number of students who want to express their commitment through volunteer work.

Preparing for Further Education

Through its academic program, the Academy seeks to prepare its students for further education by inculcating a spirit of intellectual inquiry and initiative, developing competency in expression and understanding, developing discriminations in judgment, and encouraging a desire for continuing self-education. The curriculum is reviewed annually and a major revision of the course of study was completed in 1983.

All students are now required to take four years of English and religion; three years of math, social studies, science, and foreign language; and one year of arts and computer science. In addition, with the approval of the Academic Dean, Academy students may take courses at the Brookdale Community College located across from the school. Academy also provides a summer school course to incoming freshmen who need to work on basic skills in English and math, usually 10-15 students a year.

More than 95% of Academy students exceed the school's requirements in math and computer science. In addition, approximately 80% of Academy seniors are enrolled in honors or advanced placement math, 60% in science, 55% in religion, 28% in social studies, 22% in foreign language, and 12% in English.

In addition to its academic program, Academy fosters a concern for physical and mental well-being through its four-year requirement in physical education and health classes and its extensive extra-curricular program which puts a major emphasis on intramural activities. Academy also offers a number of cultural activities to its students, including visits to New York for plays, concerts, museum exhibitions, and annual trips to Europe.

Nearly 100% of Academy's students are admitted to a college or university program upon graduation each year. In 1983, Academy had two National Merit finalists; in 1984 it had four semi-finalists and 23 commended students.

The Future

Christian Brothers Academy's major challenge in the past few years has been the limitations of its physical plant, resulting in scheduling difficulties and limited course offerings, especially in the arts. To address this problem, Academy has begun "Project 80's," a fund-raising drive to expand school facilities. The plans call for a new classroom wing, a chapel, an auditorium, and the renovation of one building into an Arts and Music Center.

For More Information Contact:
Christian Brothers Academy
Newman Springs Road
Lincroft, NJ 07738
201/747-1959

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CONESTOGA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Berwyn, Pennsylvania

"Conestoga High School has made a strong commitment to providing quality education to students with a variety of academic needs. To that end, the direction of administrative leadership has been to "open" the school to its public—to provide teachers, students, parents, and community members opportunities for personal involvement in all aspects of the design and development of its educational policies, programs, and practices. . . An awareness of the magnitude and significance of this involvement is important in understanding the success of Conestoga High School." Principal

Conestoga Senior High School is located in the suburban community of Berwyn, Pennsylvania (pop. 32,083) on the "Main Line" of Philadelphia. It is part of the Tredyffrin/Eastown School District which includes two junior high schools and five elementary schools.

Conestoga has a student population of 1,258 in grades 10-12, 94.8% of whom are white, 4% black, 1% Asian, and .2% Hispanic. Approximately 2% of the students are from low-income families (based on applications accepted for free and reduced-price lunches).

The faculty includes 83 classroom teachers (three part-time), three subject area specialists, three library/media specialists, seven counselors, a psychologist, and a part-time social worker. The staff is supported by seven part-time teacher aides, 22 clerical and food service personnel, and a security officer. There are four administrators.

Academic Program

Conestoga serves an educationally-oriented community, and approximately 85% of its graduates enroll in college or university programs. The school has a strong academic curriculum and encourages students to engage in challenging coursework. Of its students enrolled in honors or advanced placement, 10% are in English, 11% in mathematics, 7% in social studies/art, 8% in science, and 12% in foreign language. These figures do not include students in accelerated courses or independent study.

Students' schedules are completely individualized; in addition to college preparatory courses, students may select from a number of specialized programs—for example, art and music, a bilingual and multi-cultural E.S.L. program, and career education. The Cooperative Career Education (CCE) program is designed for students who plan to seek jobs immediately upon graduation. They spend at least half of the school day in class and the remainder gaining work experience. As a measure of success, students in this program have shown marked improvement in academic performance, social development, and self-esteem. Consequently, the drop-out rate has traditionally been below 5%.

Conestoga also offers a variety of remediation programs for students with specific problems in the basic skills. Special sequential courses have been developed in English, reading, and mathematics, and class size is limited so students can receive individualized instruction. In addition, the school provides professionally staffed resource rooms in language arts, mathematics, social studies, and foreign language. Students may be referred to these resource rooms by their teachers or they may seek help on their own. A resource room for mainstreamed learning disabled students also serves 25 students.

At Conestoga there are honor rolls and awards for scholastic excellence, honors and awards for school activities and athletic achievements, a National Honor Society, an academic competition team, and the Pioneer of the Month service award, recognized over the public address system, in the school and local newspapers, and at award assemblies and banquets.

In 1982, Educational Quality Assessment results showed that Conestoga scored higher than 90% of the participating high schools throughout Pennsylvania on each of the seven cognitive tests. Of the 84 candidates taking 141 Advanced Placement Examinations, 88% earned a grade of three or higher. Fifty-nine students received nonathletic scholarships and awards.

Communication and Participation

The principal believes that "A school open to its constituents is not a school devoid of problems. Rather, it is a school where strong leadership, involvement, communication, and commitment combine to foster viable opportunities for problem solution and personal success."

Conestoga is aware of the widespread criticism of public education and the significant shifts toward private schools. However, Conestoga believes it is an exception to the national trend due largely to the administrative decision to communicate with parents regarding the school's program, confident that it compares favorably with area private schools. Communication and involvement are the key factors in its success.

Conestoga seeks to operate on the basis of trust, and believes that trust is fostered through open communication and participation in decision making. Students, school staff, and parents work together in all aspects of the school program.

Students not only make decisions regarding their educational schedules and their co-curricular activities, they also decide how they will use the unscheduled time which is built into the school day. The student government is active, and student representatives sit on the Board of School Directors, the district Curriculum Council, the Guidance Advisory Committee, and the Discipline Committee. Students are proud of their part in decision making and feel the administration "really listens."

Extensive opportunity exists for teacher participation in all facets of Conestoga's educational program. Teachers serve on the district's Curriculum Council; the Discipline Committee; the Faculty Senate; and numerous other committees which address curricular, professional, and evaluative issues. In addition, Conestoga's administration is committed to an open-door policy, and staff is encouraged to drop in to discuss concerns and ideas.

Parents also participate on curriculum and discipline code committees. In addition, each grade has a Class Parents Steering Committee which meets monthly, publishes quarterly newsletters, welcomes new families to the school, operates the volunteer program, and provides assistance with school activities. Over 45 parent volunteers are actively involved each week in tasks ranging from food purchasing for the Home Economics Department to tutoring. More than 40 parents, certified by the American Red Cross, instruct juniors in CPR as part of the health curriculum, and 25 parents work with the Guidance Department in operating the College and Career Resource Center which is available to both the school and the community. The center has extensive career information materials and provides a variety of career development activities.

Conestoga students are quick to speak up for their school and appear happy, relaxed, and involved; they feel that teachers really care about them. Teachers feel that the involvement of parents, students, and teachers in everyday affairs is the reason that the school excels. Parents feel communication at the school is outstanding and they are proud to be part of it. The Educational Quality Assessment placed Conestoga at the 99th percentile in student perception of parent interest in school as well as in teacher satisfaction with relationships with parents.

Community Involvement

Conestoga has worked hard and successfully to involve the community in the school.

In the Career Elective Program, approximately 225 community sponsors provide month-long internships in their business or professional fields to members of the senior class. Working together, students and sponsors construct a work plan which will give an overview of the field. From 200 to 250 seniors (60%), their parents, and half the faculty participate each year.

Conestoga also works with the Bryn Mawr Rehabilitation Hospital in the Junior Field Experience, a program to acquaint students with career opportunities in the health care field.

A number of programs involve the community regularly in the school day. In the Retired Senior Citizens Volunteer Program, older citizens visit classes and help with clerical work. The Surrey Club, another organization of retired persons, works in home economics programs. Other programs involve community members as resource persons to specific classes where they discuss topics ranging from genetics to interior design. Community members also participate in a career series sponsored by the Guidance Department. Finally, the community sponsors individually designed "extended experiences" and a number of school clubs, for example, Rotary Interact, the Lions' Leo Club, and Junior Achievement.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of Conestoga's outreach was its decision to involve the school with the community in a combined attempt to combat drug and alcohol abuse. Out of this grew ARCH (Area Residents Caring and Helping), an organization of school, police, civic, religious, and business groups and individuals. ARCH sponsors community meetings, provides speakers for parent and student groups, publishes an information newsletter, and organizes recreational activities for students. In addition, Conestoga has revised the health curriculum, conducted staff development programs, and instigated a mandatory drug/alcohol education program for students involved in drug or alcohol abuse/sales in school.

The Future

The principal sees "only good things . . . ahead for Conestoga. With the support and interest our community has, we will have to do a quality job. We want to do our best as educators and they are willing to help. With parents, teachers, and students working together we will be able to realize our goals today and in the future." Teachers suggest that one area to be targeted for more attention is the improvement of students' study skills across the curriculum, and further development of programs and incentives for the average, non-college bound student.

For More Information Contact:
Conestoga Senior High School
Conestoga and Irish Roads
Berwyn, PA 19312
215/644-1440

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DELBARTON SCHOOL

Morristown, New Jersey

"We are, and are becoming in character, precisely what we are striving to be: a challenging community in which, because of the intensity of the challenge and the support in the relationships, people grow to their full potential. More than that, people learn how to be responsible and accountable and show every likelihood of being that way in their relationships once they leave." Headmaster

Delbarton is a private, independent, college preparatory school, administered by the Benedictine monks of St. Mary's Abbey in the predominantly white, middle class, suburban community of Morristown, New Jersey. Delbarton has an enrollment of 487 boys in grades 7 through 12, selected for admission by competitive examination and SSAT scores. The ethnic composition of the student body is 93% white, with a small percentage of Asian (3.5%), Hispanic (2.5%), black (1%), and Native American (.25%) students. Fourteen percent of the students receive grants in aid.

Delbarton employs five full-time and four part-time administrators, 45 full-time and 12 part-time teachers, two media professionals, and two full-time and four part-time counselors. Delbarton has an average class size of fewer than 16 students.

Philosophy of Community

Delbarton's philosophy and goals are rooted in the values of the Christian community and the monastic tradition of education. It is a community where individuals are challenged to become all that they can become intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and socially. Each student is taught to place the highest value on communion with God and neighbor, and to pursue this with all his heart, soul, and mind. Each is encouraged to assume responsibility for gaining both knowledge and judgment, which will strengthen his faith, his contribution to the life of the school, and his later contribution to society.

The school's philosophy is reflected in its demanding academic environment, its discipline by conversation, its "Deanery" program, its emphasis on guidance, its campus ministry, and its extensive social action program.

Demanding Program

Delbarton requires its students to complete four years of English, mathematics, and religion (if students are Roman Catholic), and three years of science, social studies, and foreign language. It also emphasizes the arts, requiring students to take courses in music and the fine arts. Recently, Delbarton decided to require students in 7th, 9th, and 12th grades to take computer-related courses. In all of these areas, Delbarton offers advanced placement courses. Eighty percent of its seniors enroll in them.

Delbarton requires students to take four years of physical education. It offers, in addition, a wide range of intramural sports. It also fields teams at three levels (freshman, junior varsity, and varsity) in nine sports. These teams play competitively in private, parochial, and public school championships. They have won, since 1980, over 20 county, sectional, and state championships.

In addition to these activities, Delbarton's extra curricular activities include music groups (the Abbey Orchestra, Abbey Strings, Wind Ensemble, Brass Ensemble, and Schola Cantorum; a drama group (The Abbey Players); teams in mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, debating, chess, and backgammon; a student-directed newspaper and working journal; and a wide variety of clubs.

Discipline

Delbarton's discipline program is based on its concept of community. The school's discipline policy expresses the philosophy that moral vision occurs only in a context where one is free to make choices, and where individuals can engage in discussion about those choices. For this reason, the school has instituted "discipline by conversation." Delbarton's values are stated in student and faculty handbooks, and are clarified, affirmed, and reinforced through adult modeling, positive peer pressure, and through the system of conversation. The school has established a group of moderators who lead students through conversation on moral issues and instruction regarding their behavior. Through confrontation with moral dilemmas, in a supportive and

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affirming community, students gradually move from a lower to a higher level of moral reasoning (c.f., Kohlberg). Through this approach to student behavior, Delbarton has avoided demerit systems, detentions, and merely punitive measures of discipline.

Student Governance

Since 1981, Delbarton has concentrated on developing and improving a program in student government and student relationships which is based on the organization of monastic communities as outlined in the Rule of Benedict. The "deanery" program incorporates everyone in the school in a support network, and provides leadership training for members of the student body. The program divides the students into thirty-six support groups, and assigns two senior deans to each group. Each of the deans receives leadership training in group dynamics and school values, and is given responsibility over 13 7th through 11th grade students. The deans meet weekly with their students and help them, through peer modeling and leadership, to develop school spirit and to succeed in the programs offered by the school.

The student governing body, the Council of Seniors, is made up of officers elected by the entire student body, the class presidents, and five deans which they select. The Council of Seniors has responsibility for every aspect of school life, including advising on the curriculum and discipline. The students run the social life of the school, clubs, social action programs, retreats and spiritual programs of the campus ministry, elections, and many other areas of student life. For example, during one school year, the Council organized and conducted a "spirit week," the school's annual prejudice reduction workshop (in collaboration with the social action committee and the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League), a two-week workshop for all students on stress and alcoholism; and an ongoing program in the development of trust among students, which is currently encouraging students to take the locks off their lockers.

Delbarton's commitment to providing its students with leadership training has resulted in the school establishing its own on-campus program. This program began by bringing in training personnel from other institutions. In 1983, Delbarton hired a psychologist specializing in group dynamics, and has gradually doubled the time spent training student leaders.

Guidance and Campus Ministry

Central to Delbarton's concept of community is the establishment of an open and readily available support network. This network is always expanding and developing new systems, both formal and informal, for students to discuss their interests, feelings, and problems. The school has eight Benedictine guidance counselors, each responsible for the guidance of 60 students. The counselors hold several formal counseling sessions daily as well as informal sessions with students who drop by the counseling offices during their free time. Each class at Delbarton has a faculty moderator who also provides counseling, particularly on discipline matters. The school is currently developing a system where each student deanery would have a faculty advisor. Through the development and training of student leaders, a peer counseling program is also evolving.

Delbarton's campus ministry program has a full-time campus minister, as well as six adults who work part-time, and over 150 students who assist in ministry activities. The students have established an extensive freshman retreat program, conducted evenings of recollection, run many of the community service activities, and are responsible for liturgy and worship, as well as the ongoing establishment of discussion and prayer groups. In addition, students involved in Delbarton's campus ministry often assume leadership roles in their own parish youth programs. The centrality of the campus ministry in school life is evident in the use of its offices at all hours of the school day. The campus ministry program provides a major link in Delbarton's community support network.

Social Action Programs

In keeping with the Benedictine faith, Delbarton has emphasized and promoted social responsibility among the students. Because of the well-to-do nature of its student body, the school has deliberately worked to increase student awareness and sensitivity to others who may be less fortunate. The school has a varied and wide-reaching community service program which includes: hospital and orphanage support; adopt-a-grandparent program; a basketball clinic for the retarded; tri-county scholarship support; leadership outreach programs; Harding Township youth corps; and ambulance and first aid squads.

Since 1982, Delbarton has been involved in an ongoing social action program with the Christian Appalachian Project in Martin, Kentucky. Through this project, Delbarton students have traveled to Kentucky before and after Christmas, as well as during the summer to help the poor residents of that Martin community. In 1983, with the opening of the Mountain Christian Academy, the project expanded to include academic tutoring, camping activities, and construction work. Last July, a computer camp was held at Delbarton for able Appalachian children from Martin. This camp was initiated and designed by Delbarton student volunteers, and included transporting six or seven Appalachian children to Morristown for a week. During this time, Martin children stayed in the homes of Delbarton students, attended computer instruction in the mornings, and traveled to various sites in the afternoons and evenings. The purpose of Delbarton's work was to tutor the Martin children and motivate them so that they could be better prepared for college. Later they might return to Appalachia with the skills to effect a positive and permanent impact on the economy there. Participation in all of these programs is voluntary; the school, however, believes that students should participate at some point in community service, leadership training, or religious leadership activity.

The Future

Delbarton's headmaster and staff are committed to ongoing improvement. Currently, the school's Academic Council is completing a two-year review of the school's curriculum. Projects being planned will seek to integrate future campus ministry programs into the total life of the school, develop further the school's counselling program, determine how technology can best be integrated into the instructional programs, and begin a capital expansion program.

For More Information Contact:
Delbarton School
Mendham Road
Morristown, NJ 07960
201/538-3231

This profile was prepared by Research for Better Schools, Inc. (RBS), 444 North Third Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123, using information supplied by the subject school, and using the written comments and observations made by the Department of Education site observer who visited the school. This conference was conducted by RBS and funded through a grant from the National Institute of Education.

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DeMATHA CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Hyattsville, Maryland

"If education is to improve in our country, emphasis must change from expenditures in hardware and facilities to greater support for the people who teach. DeMatha has an exciting story to tell, and I am anxious to have DeMatha's staff rewarded for a fantastic job and for other schools to see what can be accomplished when people are willing to work, willing to sacrifice, and anxious to be educators." Principal

DeMatha Catholic High School serves young men of varied backgrounds in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area who plan to continue their education beyond high school. Located in the suburban community of Hyattsville, Maryland, it is the largest private secondary school in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. Tuition and fees at DeMatha are $1,950 a year.

DeMatha has an enrollment of 900 boys in grades 9-12. Approximately 71% of the students are white, 24% black, 3% Hispanic and 2% Asian. Two percent of the students come from low-income families, and 24% receive some financial aid, generally in grants of $100-300.

The faculty, composed both of members of the Trinitarian Order and laymen, includes 45 teachers, three counselors, and three library/media specialists. They are supported by seven food service workers, six clerical staff, and one buildings and grounds staff person. There are three administrators, the principal, his assistant, and a business manager; the latter two each carry a one-class teaching responsibility. The principal has been at the school for 29 years, 17 as principal. He is the first lay principal appointed to a Catholic high school in the Washington area. The average faculty member has been at DeMatha for eight years.

Philosophy

DeMatha strives to offer an environment in which faith and knowledge complement each other in aiding the student's growth toward adulthood.

In its philosophy, the student grows intellectually by acquiring the knowledge, skills, and habits necessary to live effectively in the modern world and to pursue formal instruction after graduation—spiritually by increasing his awareness of the religious values which will shape and transform his life; socially by increasing his awareness of his responsibility to his neighbor, his country and his national heritage; and physically by learning to make the most of his natural health endowment.

DeMatha's program undergoes constant evaluation, but the basic goal remains the same: to graduate a young adult who faces life with confidence in himself and with the human resources necessary for further understanding of himself, his society and his God.

DeMatha's philosophy in building curriculum is to provide courses for the students enrolled rather than to fit students into a pre-established curriculum. To organize a secondary school around these principles is very challenging.

The entire school community participates in creating the necessary atmosphere, enthusiasm, and leadership. At the beginning of each year, the faculty spends a day in retreat to set the goals and the tone for the school year. The student body has an identical retreat, with faculty and seniors acting as leaders.

Academic Program

DeMatha seeks to attract students of varied talents and interests and to provide a program which challenges them to high levels of achievement. Because it has always served students representative of the population, DeMatha has been called a "school of overachievers."

By the time they are seniors, 76% of students have taken advanced placement or honors courses in math, 60% in foreign language, 57% in science, 32% in computer science, 20% in social studies, and 9% in the arts. In most years, over 90% of its students are admitted to college programs upon graduation.

Despite limited space, DeMatha offers a curriculum which has 285 sections of 97 different courses and accommodates over 95% of student preferences, with an average of 25 students per class. Qualified students may also take courses at three local colleges.

Science and Technology

DeMatha's math, science, and computer departments offer multi-level programs within each course to meet the needs of a wide range of students. The

result is a curriculum which surpasses in breadth and depth the most sophisticated magnet schools. Its program of computer studies has been in place for more than eight years. A minimum of one computer course is now a pre-requisite for all students, and 30% of these students will have been introduced to at least four computer languages (BASIC, Fortran, Pascal, Cobol). It has computer hardware valued at over $125,000; faculty and students have written over $75,000 in software programs. The computer lab now provides instruction to 400 students a year, handles virtually all of the school's administrative needs, and provides report card, billing, and scheduling services to several other schools. The lab is open all day, year round, operated by faculty and paid student aides. The Maryland State Department of Education has asked DeMatha to assist in setting up similar programs.

Music

Fifteen years ago, DeMatha established a music program which now is considered to be the finest of any Catholic high school in the U.S. and one of the finest in any secondary school. The school offers a wind ensemble, two concert bands, percussion ensemble, male chorus, jazz laboratory, jazz ensemble, pep band, and academic music courses.

The wind ensemble was named the outstanding Catholic band in the U.S. by the National Catholic Bandmasters' Association in four of the last five years. Each year, 12-15 DeMatha students are named to the Maryland All-State Band after competing in auditions against 900 students for 90 places. In 1983, 35 of 65 musicians in the Archdiocesan Honors Band were DeMatha students. Four or five students win music scholarships each year.

This success was accomplished in a school building with no auditorium and no original band facilities. In addition, a fire in July 1979 completely destroyed the band room, band equipment, and $12,000 in sheet music. Even so, the music director had the program back in place by September 1 of that year. The former band facilities were rebuilt into an arts center for sculpture, ceramics, fine arts, and archetectural drawing classes. The music program is now housed in two reconstructed temporary buildings obtained from the public school system.

Athletics

DeMatha's athletic program balances the academic program, and provides an opportunity for students to participate and to develop athletic skills, sound bodies, and those values best nurtured by athletic competition. The school holds high citizenship and academic standards for athletes, believing they are school citizens and students first. With only one small gymnasium and no athletic fields, DeMatha sponsors 23 teams, and 400 students participate in 12 interscholastic sports.

In the 1982-83 and 1983-84 academic years, DeMatha teams won 30 conference or tournament championships in seven sports. The basketball team has won 22 league, 16 city, and five national titles in 28 years. Large numbers of DeMatha athletes win scholarships, a testimony to their academic as well as athletic achievement. In the past 24 years, every DeMatha senior on the basketball team has won a scholarship. In five years alone, 41 football players were awarded college scholarships. More significant than obtaining these scholarships is the fact that less than 10 of these students did not complete college.

To help support the athletic program, all athletes must participate in team fund-raising. In addition, the athletic department promotes three fund-raisers and gate receipts from basketball games help support all of the non-revenue sports.

Religious Studies

DeMatha has worked for 15 years to develop a well-balanced religious studies curriculum which is now used as a model by the Washington Archdiocesan Catholic Schools office. From a gradual introduction to the Judeo/Christian tradition and continuing through the specific Catholic philosophy of morality, the student is presented with the necessary tools to discern what is moral.

The Campus Ministry Office, established four years ago, has formalized all liturgical and social service efforts. Students practice social responsibility through food drives for the poor, tutoring handicapped children, helping with the Special Olympics, and working at a local soup kitchen.

Counseling

DeMatha established in 1957, the first formal guidance program of any Catholic high school in the Archdiocese of Washington. The school now has three counselors, with a ratio of 300 students per counselor, who meet with small groups at least once a month and with individual students on request. The counselors assist students with course selection and interview all seniors at the beginning of each year regarding their post-graduation choices.

Financial Management

Eight years ago, DeMatha assigned a faculty member working on his C.P.A. to the school business operation. The school now has financial direction for successful fund-raising, a balanced budget, a reasonable benefit package for the faculty, and a realistic tuition for the clientele.

Everyone participates in fund-raising. All students help with two major fund drives which contribute $45,000 to the school budget. In addition, band students raise $12,000 a year through a dance marathon and other fund-raisers. Parents help through the Band Booster Club which raises $22,000 a year (over 78% of the total music department budget) and the DeMatha Senior Boosters (parents of alumni) which has donated over $70,000 in the past five years. DeMatha's largest fund-raiser, which results in an income of $180,000 a year, is a bingo program which is run by the faculty each Friday evening and Sunday afternoon throughout the year.

The Future

DeMatha's commitment to ongoing evaluation lays the foundation for future improvement. Currently, the school is undertaking activities aimed at strengthening articulation of its program with those of its feeder elementary schools and at encouraging parental support of appropriate student behavior outside of school. DeMatha is also laying plans to raise funds for a building program aimed at expanding its limited facilities.

For More Information Contact:
DeMatha Catholic High School
4313 Madison Street
Hyattsville, MD 20781
301/864-3666

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HARRITON HIGH SCHOOL
Rosemont, Pennsylvania

"A major contributor to the continued success of Harriton High School has been the willingness and ability of the staff, administration, and community to continue innovation and to progress toward excellence during a period of retrenchment characterized by declining enrollments." Principal

Harriton High School serves the suburban community of Lower Merion, Pennsylvania (pop. 64,147) on the "Main Line" outside of Philadelphia. It is one of two high schools in the district, which also has two middle schools and five elementary schools. The community is relatively homogenous and affluent.

Harriton has a student population of 855 in grades 9-12, which represents a decline in enrollment of 25% since 1979 when the school served only grades 10-12. Nearly 94% of the students are white, 4% are black, 1% are Asian, and fewer than 1% are Hispanic. Approximately 2% of the students come from low-income families (based on the number of free or reduced price lunches).

Harriton's faculty includes 63 classroom teachers (five part-time), a library/media specialist, and four counselors. The staff is supported by three full-time teacher aides, and fifteen clerical and food service personnel (one part-time). There are four administrators, the principal and three assistant principals, who also serve as department chairpersons for English/social studies, math/science/foreign language, and physical education/fine arts/practical arts.

Approximately 70% of the staff hold advanced degrees and more than 80% have 10 or more years of teaching experience.

Programs, Practices, Policies

The greatest challenge to Harriton is the decline in student enrollment. The district as a whole has experienced a 50% reduction since the early 1970s. In 1979, the school board resolved to merge the two high schools if their combined enrollment dropped below 1,600, or if either school could no longer maintain a comprehensive program. It directed the schools to move from an eight to a seven period day and to standardize the curriculum. In addition, the board reorganized the district, creating two middle schools and sending the ninth grade to the high schools.

During this same period Harriton determined that its open campus policy, established in the 1960s, was no longer supported by the community and was detrimental to the school. It was decided to put a greater emphasis on order and discipline. In combination, these actions created significant morale problems among Harriton's staff and students, and severely challenged its ability to continue to deliver a comprehensive educational program.

Meeting the Challenge

Harriton's principal took a number of steps to maintain a positive climate, to encourage an institutional point of view, and to meet the challenge to the educational program.

He established a faculty advisory council to provide teacher input into decision-making. Composed of six elected and two appointed teachers, the council meets every two weeks and minutes are distributed to the entire staff. In addition, he assigned the three assistant principals to serve as department chairpersons, a unique administrative organization which enhances communication among administrators and teachers. He maintains an open door policy to be readily accessible to staff and students.

He revitalized the Parent Faculty Association to provide a forum for community input and serve as a communication link to parents. Officers meet frequently with administration and staff, and the Association holds monthly education programs for parents, publishes a monthly newsletter, works with class councils to plan student activities, and participates on the Interschool Council where district issues are discussed.

He sought input through the Harriton

Student Assembly, monthly meetings of all students run by class officers to discuss school-wide issues. In addition, the Student Advisory Council, composed of leaders from both high schools, advised the principals and the superintendent.

He also used the opportunities provided by the Middle States evaluation and the state's long-range planning requirement to involve teachers, parents, and students in a reexamination of all curricular areas and an assessment of the organizational structure of the school. This process is now ongoing. Twice a year, students and parents join with school staff in reviewing each department's course content and sequence across grade levels.

Maintaining a Comprehensive Program

The hard work of staff, students, and parents under the leadership of the principal has paid off. Harriton has been able to maintain its comprehensive program at four ability levels and even improve its staff/student ratio, providing greater individualization of instruction. It has accomplished this by reorganizing the curriculum into majors and minors, by offering some electives in alternate years, by increasing independent study in advanced subjects, and by refining the course selection process.

Harriton continues to encourage its students to select academic courses well beyond the minimum requirement. A new course selection meeting each spring involves parents in planning their children's educational program. This meeting has not only enhanced parental respect for the school and given the staff a better sense of the community, it has also increased student enrollment in academic courses.

For example, approximately 54% of Harriton students are enrolled in honors or accelerated English, 29% in math, 30% in social studies, 45% in science, and 20% in foreign language. The new Scholar's Program of Studies rewards students who pursue a vigorous four-year liberal arts program. Coupled with revised graduation requirements, this program increases the amount and quality of instructional time students receive. Academically gifted students enroll in the Challenge Program to pursue long-term projects of personal interest.

The commitment to student achievement is evident in the new athletic eligibility policy which requires student athletes to maintain a 2.0 average. The grades of student athletes are monitored weekly and reported to the athletic director. The coaches have gained a new perspective regarding their role in the academic preparation of students and have organized study time before practice and peer tutoring to ensure athletes meet academic requirements. The principal is considering a similar eligibility policy for all co-curricular activities.

Harriton has also addressed the special needs of its small non-college bound clientele. As a result of new action plans for the vocational education curriculum, it now participates in the County Vocational Technical School and the district has created a Director of Vocational Education. The Cooperative Work Experience program provides a way for students to complement their basic academic program with paid work experiences. They attend classes in the morning and work in the afternoon.

Emphasizing Order and Discipline

To increase order and discipline, Harriton discontinued its open campus policy and replaced "campus rights" with "campus responsibilities." It now operates under a formal Code of Conduct, rigorously enforces school and class attendance rules, provides an in-school suspension program to discourage inappropriate behavior while maintaining continuity of instruction, and requires restitution from those who vandalize the physical plant.

Students participate in determining the specific expectations, rules, and policies which govern student behavior. These are published in a Student Guide which is reviewed at the beginning of each school year. Teachers are the primary source of discipline, supported by two "school disciplinarians," teachers with long tenure and close relationships with the student body who are on special assignment.

The overall payoff of these changes has been increased attendance, reduction in vandalism, and increased productivity. However, there has also been a negative affect on student morale. The principal has worked extensively with student leaders and the Student Assembly to demonstrate that orderliness and discipline establish a firm ground for granting privileges.

One result of this effort is the student-generated Campus Privilege Program which allows qualified students to select alternatives to study hall for their non-instructional time. Eligibility is based on grade level, parent permission, class load, grades, and attendance.

The Future

The principal characterizes the current state of the school in positive terms. There is a general agreement that major problems have been confronted and, for the most part, been solved or are being effectively addressed. There is a good feeling of accomplishment in having maintained a broad program of studies in the face of serious declining enrollment, in having established a better sense of order and discipline marked by clear, high expectations of student behavior, and in beginning to address issues of developing a better sense of community among staff and students.

There is still a morale problem; further declines in enrollment are expected and everyone is concerned about the impact. However, there is a nascent feeling of community and satisfaction with having overcome problems and achieved significant improvements in the last five years that leads to a feeling of optimism about the ability to overcome problems in the future.

For More Information Contact:
Harriton High School
600 North Ithan Avenue
Rosemont, PA 19010
215/525-1270

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May 11, 1985 ● Rosemont, Pennsylvania

JULIUS W. HOBSON SR. MIDDLE SCHOOL

Washington, D.C.

"We believe that if excellence is not the goal, why bother?" Principal

"Our reward is the freedom to be able to do what we feel we should be doing." Teacher

"This is a school unto itself. It does not seem like one of the public schools." Parent

Julius W. Hobson Senior Middle School is located in the Capitol Hill area of Washington, D.C. It is one of 3 middle schools in the District of Columbia Public Schools, which also includes 27 junior high schools, 11 high schools, and 119 elementary schools. Hobson shares the facility of the Watkins Elementary School.

Hobson Middle School has an enrollment of 249 students in grades 4-8. About 80% of the students are black, 18% are white, 2% are Asian, and a very small number are Hispanic. Twenty-five percent of the students come from low-income families. More than 80% of the students live outside the school's attendance area.

The Hobson faculty includes ten classroom teachers, five subject area specialists, 10 part-time professionals for exploratory courses, one counselor, and a library/media specialist. The faculty is supported by one teacher aide, two social workers, a security officer, five food service personnel, and one clerk. The principal spends half of her time as principal of nearby Peabody Elementary School; the assistant principal is full-time at Hobson.

Positive School Climate

The climate of Hobson Middle School is pleasant, academic, orderly, and professional. There exists a philosophy of self-discipline which undergirds the total school. The staff models the behavior expected of students, and expectations are clearly communicated. All adults assume responsibility for monitoring student behavior.

As a small school, with only ten full-time classroom teachers, there is a great deal of communication and cooperation among the staff.

Democratic decision-making and a clear school philosophy contribute to the school's climate and to the attainment of Hobson's goals and objectives.

Hobson's student services team functions to maintain and increase positive behavior among the student body. Composed of the school counselor, the resource teacher, the Dean of Students (who also teaches), the principal and assistant principal, and the social worker, the team works to eliminate inappropriate school behaviors.

Hobson has initiated a pilot citizenship program for all eighth grade students, intended to encourage self-discipline in all academic and non-academic activities. In addition, the Hobson student council provides an opportunity for student governance. The council proposes ideas for school improvements and sponsors annual elections of officers. Students also help formulate school policies at school and team assemblies.

The Program

The District of Columbia Public Schools has adopted a competency-based curriculum with published guides for each subject matter which include objectives in sequential order. The Hobson staff has developed an instructional program guide which contains timelines for achieving the specific objectives in each subject matter area. Hobson's goal is that 85% of its students will master at least 70% of the objectives of each course.

Students and parents receive course descriptions at the beginning of each semester which include content, objectives, activities, and criteria for grading. Teachers develop performance goals for each student, and students are required to maintain a "mastery of objectives" log for each class.

For students having difficulty in meeting the program's objectives, the school offers extra help outside the regular classrooms. There is a comprehensive service center and an after school tutoring program, as well as individual assistance

plans. The latter are developed in cooperation with parents. Every summer, a team of Hobson and Peabody staff reviews student achievement data and recommends curriculum changes for the coming year.

The instructional program guide resulted from this work, as did the program for talented and gifted students and the exploratory courses for all students. The focus of the gifted/talented program is enrichment rather than acceleration. Students are identified for the program using multiple criteria. Currently, about 40% of Hobson students participate in the program. The program involves students in music, the visual arts, gymnastics, and academics.

The exploratory program provides the opportunity for all students to experience a variety of courses under the guidance of professionals in a particular field. Hobson converted one teaching position into ten part-time specialist positions, to teach exploratory courses which include crafting, drawing and painting, basic carpentry, dance, improvisational theater, dramatics, banking, photography, creative writing, gymnastics, and sculpture.

In addition, classroom teachers conduct weekly activity periods in which students explore various interests, talents, and abilities. Activities are planned by team teachers at each grade level. Examples include stamp collecting, video training and producing, problem solving, dramatics, arts and crafts, band, and calculator technology. Every eight weeks, students share their accomplishments in these activities through exhibits and/or performances.

The intramural sports program offers coeducational competition in eight sports and involves about 60% of the student body on a weekly basis.

A large percentage of Hobson students are accepted by Banneker Model Academic High School, the Duke Ellington School of the Performing Arts, and the Ballou Math-Science School.

Competent Teaching

The Hobson staff is divided into teaching teams, and everyone participates in charting the direction for the school. Team meetings provide the opportunity to reevaluate, reschedule, plan for enrichment, meet with parents, and analyze the overall needs of students within the team. Staff meetings are held regularly to allow for teacher input regarding instruction, curriculum, discipline policy, teacher evaluation, and other concerns.

The principal places great emphasis on competent teaching, believing that if teachers know what is expected, they will perform accordingly. She provides the staff with indicators of effective classroom performance in communication, control, and instruction. She uses classroom observations as opportunities to raise morale and stimulate the discovery and implementation of improved teaching techniques.

Community Support

The Julius Hobson Middle School exists because people in the community work together to make it a reality. The principal, teachers, parents, and community members worked for years, using their professional and political expertise, to bring into being a unique school in an urban setting. This receptive, supportive relationship between Hobson and the community continues, creating a school that is dynamic, caring, responsive, and alive.

The PTA is very active, and there is strong parent involvement. Parents give career and vocational workshops, serve as homeroom parents and chaperones, and participate on advisory committees and in curriculum planning. The PTA finances the entire enrichment program, raising over $37,000 a year to maintain it.

The National Capitol Park Service, the Northeast Library, and Capitol Hill Hospital provide financial and/or material resources to Hobson. The Washington Performing Arts Society and the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop provide cultural enrichment programs for students. Local businesses work with the PTA in cosponsoring the Capitol Hill Marathon, a 10 kilometer race which is a major fundraiser for the school. Students participate in the race and act as route monitors.

Hobson also participates in a Congressional Internship Program for students in grades 6-8.

Students participate in an on-site, independent study project that provides experience in the day-to-day operation of a congressional office.

The Future

In May 1985, Hobson will become involved in a joint planning effort with the staff and community of a nearby junior high school which has excess space as a result of declining enrollment. The task for the planning effort is to determine the most educationally appropriate and cost-effective program for the adolescents now being served by the two schools. Specifically, the planning effort will explore the feasibility and desirability of replacing the two existing instructional programs with a single program, to be housed in the junior high school in the fall of 1985.

For More Information Contact:
Julius W. Hobson Sr. Middle School
12th & E Streets, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
202/724-4680

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MERCY VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

"The moral climate of our school is one of a caring community. The lines of communication existing between the home and school contribute to this. The dedication and moral strength of the faculty are elements that create an atmosphere of acceptance and caring. The students feel that they are accepted and there exists a tangible relationship between them and the faculty. The school itself is a comfortable place to learn, to grow, and, hopefully, to mature into an adult Christian." Principal

"We saw achievements of students whose past seemed pocked with the stigma of 'the bottom of the class.' The young people we met confirmed the view of parents and teachers that: 'The students grow in confidence. They like to come to school.' We saw teachers and students working well and easily together. We saw a gracious reverence, one for the other, and even for the old building, which shows the care of those who move happily there." Site Visit Report

Mercy Vocational High School is a private, Catholic, co-educational secondary school administered by the Sisters of Mercy in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Students from all over the city may apply for admission.

Mercy Vocational has an enrollment of 573 students in grades 9-12. Approximately 74% of the students are white, 22% are black, 3% are Hispanic, and fewer than 1% are Native American or Asian. Twenty-four percent of the students come from low-income families.

The faculty includes 28 classroom and shop teachers, three counselors, two library/media specialists (one part-time), and eight special service personnel (seven part-time). The faculty is supported by four teacher aides, two food service personnel (one part-time), seven clerical staff (one part-time), five buildings and grounds personnel (two part-time), two security officers, and 13 volunteers. There are four administrators and a treasurer.

A Unique Mission

Mercy Vocational is a school "where achievement is handmade." The school was founded in 1950 to provide an education within a Catholic atmosphere for students whose abilities and/or interests lie in the learning of a skill rather than in the pursuit of a straight academic roster. It is the only Catholic vocational high school of its kind in the United States.

The program is founded on Christian principles, and spiritual values pervade the academic curriculum and all extra-curricular activities. The school strives to give the students an appreciation of the dignity of work and to prepare them for economic independence and personal fulfillment.

Basic Academic and Vocational Program

Mercy Vocational serves the student who is often not well served in other high schools. The freshmen follow a straight academic program. Students in grades 10-12 alternate on a weekly basis between an academic program appropriate to their abilities and a strong vocational program. Academic classes are small, with no more than 25 students, and usually less.

In the academic program, all Mercy students are required to take four years of English and religion, three of social studies, two of math and science, and one in physical education and the arts. In cooperation with the Philadelphia School District, Mercy provides a Chapter 1 program for ninth grade students who score below the 26th percentile in reading, and additional remedial reading and math courses for students in grades 10-12 who continue to need help.

In the ninth grade, the vocational program is exploratory, providing the students with an overview of all shop courses including the skills required, job opportunities, and financial advantages. In the remaining three years, the students spend a great deal of their time in shops.

The shops include cosmetology, which provides a minimum of 1,250 hours to

qualify students for the State Boards; carpentry, with courses in cabinet making and construction which equip students to take the test for entry to the union apprenticeship program; commercial baking; electricity and industrial electricity; electronics; and business. A recent Radio Shack grant has provided Mercy with six computers to network all existing vocational programs and to involve more students in computer literacy.

Mercy also offers a shared time program with the Philadelphia Public Schools' Randolph Skills Center, where students may take shop courses not offered at Mercy. These shops are arranged in clusters and include health services, construction, distribution, communications, power mechanics, manufacturing and maintenance, and personal services. Mercy students at the Skills Center have taken most of the first prize awards in regional competitions. In 1983, nine of the top ten seniors at the Skills Center were Mercy students.

Mercy students acquire marketable skills that enable many to get jobs even before they graduate. Over three-quarters of its graduates find full-time employment or enter the military upon graduation, and a growing number (23% in 1983) are entering college or other post-secondary educational programs.

A Caring Community

Mercy Vocational is a caring community. There is a pervasive spirit of orderliness, warmth, and friendliness. The students look to the faculty and staff and see honesty, fidelity, compassion, dedication, and, in turn, they rise to calls in their own lives for these virtues.

The Christian philosophy provides the moral bedrock of the school. Religious activities develop a sense of a personal God who loves all his creatures individually. A priest chaplain is available each day for the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist and for personal counseling. The discipline code is enforced as a student's training in moral standards.

Mercy students belong to a diocesan high school group known as the Community Service Corps (CSC). Among the smallest of the schools, Mercy shows its spirit through generous participation in organized activities for children, the aging, the hungry, the handicapped, and the lonely. The vocational character of the school shows in its creative services. Bake shop students market their products at student lunches, and also provide baked goods for the school's many social functions. Students in the carpentry shop designed and executed many of the wood panels that beautify the school. The business shop makes flyers, brochures, and booklets for various groups.

Mercy welcomes and encourages parent involvement. Some parents help to sell baked goods in the cafeteria. Many parents volunteer to help with the school's major fund raisers. They take an active part in socials, and in repairs and renovations of the school facility.

The Continuing Fiscal Challenge

Mercy Vocational was almost phased out in 1976 because of continued financial difficulties. Through the combined efforts of administration, faculty, parents, and students, the situation was corrected within a year's time. Since then, the school has operated on a balanced budget, expanded to a four-year program, and enlarged both its student body and its curriculum.

Even so, a vocational school is expensive to operate. Any new shop program involves large initial costs for equipment as well as ongoing expenses. And salaries must attract qualified instructors.

Tuition payments cover only 63% of the operating costs of the school. Mercy tries to keep its tuition on a par with other Philadelphia diocesan high schools.

Although Mercy is not entitled to parish contributions for the students who attend, it has been recognized by the Archdiocese for the tremendous need it fills and for the quality of its program. The Archdiocese has provided a substantial money grant to extensively renovate and repair the school buildings.

The Future

Within the constraints of a tight budget and limited space, Mercy Vocational wants to expand its vocational offerings and increase the number of extracurricular activities.

For More Information Contact:
Mercy Vocational High School
2900 W. Hunting Park Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19129
215/226-1225

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• THE 1983-84 SECONDARY SCHOOL RECOGNITION PROGRAM •

Conversations on Excellence in Education

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May 11, 1985 • Rosemont, Pennsylvania

MT. LEBANON HIGH SCHOOL
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

"The most important element of our school's success has been its well developed program of studies that appropriately challenges students' abilities . . . The changes that have contributed the most to progress toward excellence are the changes in the expectations that we have of students to attend to educational matters during the school day." Principal

Mt. Lebanon High School serves the suburban community of Mt. Lebanon (pop. 34,414) in the South Hills area of Pittsburgh, Pa. It is the only high school in a district which has one junior high and seven elementary schools. On the average, at least one parent in each student's home has a formal education beyond the Bachelor's degree. The community is dedicated to supporting good education and holds high expectations for its children.

Mt. Lebanon has a student population of 2,260 in grades 9-12. Over 97% of the students are white, with fewer than 1% black, 1.5% Asian, and 1% Hispanic. About 3% of the students come from low-income families. Over 80% of Mt. Lebanon graduates go on to colleges or universities, 8% attend vocational/technical schools, and the remainder enter the work force or the armed services.

Mt. Lebanon's faculty includes 141 classroom teachers (three part-time), seven counselors, and three library/media specialists. The faculty is supported by three teacher aides, eight subject area specialists that serve as in-district coordinators, 21 clerical staff, and 19 food service personnel. There are six administrators. The average teacher has a Master's degree plus ten credits and 18 years of teaching experience, 10 in Mt. Lebanon.

Mt. Lebanon has always been known for the academic success of its students. However, in the 1960s it followed the national trend toward more "relevant" courses with a phasing of levels and "unassigned" time for students. By the late seventies, Mt. Lebanon determined that tightened expectations would more effectively meet the needs of its students.

Tightening the Curriculum and Learning Environment

Mt. Lebanon began by moving toward a more prescriptive curriculum. It now offers four levels of courses—advanced placement, honors, regular, and "modified." Modified courses have been adapted for students who need remediation or reinforcement in a particular curricular area. Before being admitted to these courses, students are screened by a committee composed of the school psychologist, the department coordinator, and the students' counselors and teachers.

Each curricular department has strengthened its prescriptions and looked carefully at evaluation. To provide a common basis for instruction, teachers have developed a curriculum guide for each course which outlines objectives, content, achievement levels, and evaluation. In addition, each department meets monthly to discuss instruction and curriculum with its coordinator. The first meeting of each school year is used to review newly developed material. It is at these meetings that the vast majority of instructional and curricular decisions are made.

Other aspects of the school environment have been tightened as well. Students no longer have unassigned time, but must report to a class or study hall each period of the school day. And there is a new policy on attendance. If a student is absent eight times in one semester, a letter is sent to the parents. After ten absences, the student must appeal to the Attendance Committee, composed of teachers and administrators, to receive credit for that semester's work.

Academic Challenge

The administration and faculty actively encourage Mt. Lebanon students to engage in a challenging course of study. A course offerings booklet contains a special section, "Choose to be Challenged," which encourages students to select a program which stretches them.

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Students themselves have organized a Student Peer Assistance Program to promote academic achievement. Over 200 students meet with homeroom classes to sell students on challenging courses. They also arrange seminars on study skills, offer tutoring services, and reinforce vocational planning.

The "challenge" program is working! Over a two-year period, the number of seniors who elected six rather than five major subjects jumped from 16% to 68% and Mt. Lebanon students far exceed the minimum state requirements overall. Ninety-five percent of the students now graduate with three years of mathematics, 81% with three years of science, 68% with at least one computer course, and 58% with a foreign language. In addition, 24% of the students take honors or advanced placement courses in English, 33% in math, 23% in social studies, 24% in science, 12% in computers, and 8% in foreign language.

Students are achieving. The Educational Records Bureau Achievement Test Battery, which is given each year, indicates that Mt. Lebanon ninth graders achieve at or above expectancy in every measured area and significantly higher than national norms. On the state's Educational Quality Assessment instrument, students scored at the 99th percentile in all of the cognitive areas. In 1984, the school claimed fifteen National Merit finalists and twenty-three commended students.

Keeping an Open School

Mt. Lebanon never closes. The school is open from 7:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. every day of the school week. The school calendar is alive with activities for students six-and-a-half days a week, including 57 clubs, 32 sports programs, seven performing music companies, and a theatre company. Approximately 85% of the student body is involved in one or more of these activities.

The Student Activities Office keeps a record of each student's participation in school activities. Faculty sponsors evaluate each student and points are accumulated for later awards.

Everyone is Involved in Decision-Making

All facets of the school population are represented on advisory groups and have their own avenues of input into school decisions. It is all based on respect for individual opinions aimed at improving the high school experience.

Students are involved through the Student Congress, composed of homeroom representatives, which meets monthly. Student Congress representatives sit on the Principal's Advisory Council with Students, the Student Curriculum Council, the Parent-Teacher-Student Association Council, and the PTSA Advisory Board, and speak at monthly school board meetings. Students are represented on every committee of the Middle States evaluation, Long Range Planning for School Improvement, and Educational Quality Assessment.

In addition to their leadership role in curriculum development, teachers address instructional and school management issues through the Principal's Advisory Council with Teachers which has representatives from each curriculum department. They are active in the PTSA and an essential part of Middle States and Long Range Planning activities.

Mt. Lebanon enjoys an open and active interaction with the community. Committees for any major change always include parent and community members. The High School Advisory Board for Planning and Change includes parent representatives from each of the seven neighborhood school areas in the district. The Long Range Planning Committee seeks representatives from community organizations. The PTSA works hand-in-hand with the high school in supporting positive changes, helping with school programs, and serving on a variety of committees that give direction to the school.

Staff Development

Each department works with the district Director of Staff Development to plan four staff development days to respond to district, building, department, or individual teacher needs. Mt. Lebanon also arranges ongoing workshops in response to teacher interest, for example, writing and computer literacy. In addition, teachers are reimbursed by the district for graduate credits and the school spends $10,000 per year to send teachers to conferences and workshops.

The Cum Laude Society recognizes up to four teachers each year for their accomplishments along with recognizing high school students with high academic achievements. The faculty receives an impressive number of awards from outside agencies.

The Future

The area of most activity is the plan to implement a thinking skills improvement program that has been the center of a teacher committee activity for the past two years. The school is now ready to move to the training phase, at the secondary level, through a staff development program extending over a three-year period. To help in teaching thinking skills, the program will include a review of affective teaching techniques and skills.

For More Information Contact:
Mt. Lebanon High School
155 Cochran Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15228
412/344-2003

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PRINCETON CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Princeton, New Jersey

"The prevailing attitude of the staff at the Princeton Child Development Institute is that children can learn and teachers can teach. Our staff has encountered successes and setbacks. However, when a child fails to make the anticipated progress, our assumption is always that the curriculum or treatment program was wrong, not the child." Principal

The Princeton Child Development Institute (PCDI), in Princeton, New Jersey, is an education and treatment program for autistic youth who are unable to be educated in the public school system due to learning and behavioral problems. The Institute has 21 students and employs three administrators, four teachers, and seven teacher aides.

PCDI, in addition to its programs for autistic youth and their families, conducts research on the effectiveness of alternative treatments, develops model programs, and provides training and technical assistance to other agencies interested in replicating those programs. It also offers internships for paraprofessional child care workers, community volunteers, and students from nearby colleges and universities.

Achievable Goals

Autistic children and youth have severe language and conceptual deficits and exhibit severe behavioral disorders (e.g., self-abuse, self-stimulation, and aggression). Historically, they have been destined to spend their lives in institutional environments where they are often physically restrained or heavily sedated with drugs.

PCDI's primary goals are to enable its students to continue to live with their families, and to avoid institutionalization. It also seeks to prepare them for enrollment in public school, for life in the community, and for productive employment. To achieve these goals, the school offers individualized instructional programs, parent training, community entry programs, and follow-up services.

Individualized Treatment

Since no two children are alike, and behavior problems vary greatly from student to student, PCDI designs an individualized program for each student. Most programs include traditional school subjects such as conversational language, reading, mathematics, introductory science, pre-vocational skills, physical education, art, and music.

Through all these subjects, teachers work on such problems as language development, deficits in social skills, difficulties in following directions, and difficulties in controlling behavior.

Each program includes a motivational system to reward appropriate behaviors and academic success. The system varies depending on a student's interest and skills. The staff provides immediate feedback for correct responses through pats on the back, behavior-specific praise, and other positive actions. Students also earn tokens or point cards, which may be exchanged for special snacks, leisure activities or materials, or special privileges. These actions and earned privileges help students learn new skills that were previously difficult for them, and make learning experiences pleasant.

As the school begins work with a student, it usually schedules the student into one-on-one instructional sessions. As students acquire academic skills and learn to control problem behaviors, they are placed in small classes of two to five students. These classes, designed to model public school classrooms, help students learn to work independently, raise their hands for assistance, and work without disrupting others.

Data-based Planning and Decision-making

PCDI's individualized programs are data-based. Objective measures are used daily to collect information on each student's academic and behavior progress. The staff meets weekly to review

this information, and they determine what changes and adjustments should be made in each student's program. The staff is governed in its work by the belief that when a child fails to make anticipated progress, it is the treatment that is wrong, not the child.

The constant monitoring of student performance creates among the staff an expectation for change. Even though the staff experiences setbacks, the information collected demonstrates that their students can make progress, and that they can acquire the skills necessary to become productive members of the community.

Parent Involvement

Staff at PCDI feel that parent involvement is essential in an autistic student's education and treatment. The school's system is to assign to every student a staff member who will bring training services to the family. The "Home Programmer" designs home education and treatment programs, and trains the parents to both implement those programs and collect data regarding the student's performance. These home programs are directed at academic, self-care, and leisure skills.

Transition to Less Restrictive Settings

One of PCDI's main goals is for students to acquire the requisite skills to enter public school classrooms and other community settings. When a student demonstrates readiness, staff members and administrators design an individual transition program that provides a general introduction to the new setting. Once established in that setting, staff provide follow-up consultation services to parents, school personnel, or supervisors, in order to ensure the student's continued success. During the past nine years, 21% of PCDI's students have successfully moved to a less restrictive academic setting in the public or private sector.

Program Evaluation

PCDI believes that any program treating autistic youngsters must have an accountability system to protect the rights of those youngsters. Toward this end, they systematically monitor program effects.

PCDI prepares an annual report which presents detailed and objective data to parents, governing and review boards, referral and funding agencies, potential consumers, and the community. The report is designed as a system for protecting student rights, and includes: (1) a summary of the number and type of child individualized education and treatment programs which were provided; (2) external evaluators' ratings of these programs; (3) child test scores on standardized testing instruments; (4) anecdotal accounts of child progress; and (5) measures of parent-training, community-entry, and follow-up services. In addition, PCDI has a monthly visitors day during which parents, community members, and college students can visit and observe the programs. Finally, they conduct an annual consumer evaluation survey through which they obtain feedback from parents, representatives of referral and funding agencies, members of governing and review boards, student interns, and staff members on the extent to which their program is meeting student needs.

Research and Development

PCDI is nationally known for its research in autism. The Institute's primary research objective is to create replicable models of treatment programs that will benefit not only its own students, but, potentially, all autistic children. Current research and development activities focus on language acquisition, the development of computer assisted curricula, construction of systems to assure protection of the rights of autistic children and youth, continuing development of an effective parent-training system, and ongoing research on family-style community-based models of residential treatment.

Family Focus was the first teaching family model group home for autistic children and youth in the nation. This home, along with one recently founded in 1983, provides services around the clock for autistic youth who are no longer able to remain with their families. These children would be institutionalized if these homes did not exist.

The Future

Currently, PCDI's Board of Trustees is involved in a campaign to raise funds for a new education and research building with the capacity to contain the instruction, service, research, and training activities of the Institute. This new facility will enable PCDI to expand its research and training activities. The emphasis of future research activities will be the development of an intervention model for transitioning developmentally disabled youth to less restrictive academic, vocational, and residential placements.

For More Information Contact:
Princeton Child Development Institute
527 Stockton Street
P.O. Box 2013
Princeton, NJ 08540
609/924-6280

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RADNOR HIGH SCHOOL

Radnor, Pennsylvania

"It would . . . be hard to find any other school in the state with such a diversified, well-rounded educational program, with such a high achieving group of students, with an up-to-date facility and equipment, with such a dedicated faculty . . . and a set of traditions that carry on from class to class." Principal

Radnor High School is located in the suburban community of Radnor Township, Pennsylvania (pop., 29,000), on the "Main Line" outside of Philadelphia. The mostly professional, college-educated parents in this community generously support the district's two elementary, junior high, and high schools.

Radnor High School has a student population of 1,021 in grades 9-12, 94% of whom are white, 4% black, and 2% Asian. Approximately 20% of the students come from low-income families (based on estimated market value of students' residences). The faculty, 85% of whom hold advanced degrees, includes 81 classroom teachers (eight part-time), six specialists (reading, special education, and gifted), two library/media specialists, five and one-half counselors (one part-time). The staff is supported by four full-time aides, a full-time nurse, a part-time athletic trainer, 10 secretaries, and 13 food service personnel. The administration includes the principal, assistant principals for instruction and administration, and two part-time attendance coordinators.

Academic Program

Radnor students are primarily college preparatory; at least 80% of graduating seniors enroll in a four-year college or university, and approximately 10% enter two-year college. However, the school also offers a vocational-technical and a work-study program. Flexible scheduling permits students to select a personal program of study to fit future plans and interests.

All students are required to elect five major subjects every year as well as health and physical education. The percentage of students in honors or advanced placement courses is high—over 19% in English, 22% in math, 37% in social studies, 25% in science, and 22% in foreign languages.

Radnor monitors student skill development at all levels. Students must demonstrate basic skills before attempting elective study. A reading/writing workshop and a practical writing course provide intensive review and practice in these areas. All departments provide remedial courses, including foreign language. The Spanish Department offers a special program where students can study Spanish while they work to improve their language arts skills.

The Learning Assistance Program meets the needs of physically or neurologically handicapped, or socially or emotionally disturbed students. The program provides a liaison teacher to work with the students when they are mainstreamed, and two full-time special education instructors.

Radnor also participates in A Better Chance (ABC), a national program for educationally deprived but academically talented youth from cities such as Chicago and New York. The students live together in Radnor, in a home funded by the community and become an integral part of the community and the school. This program, which has been at Radnor for over 10 years, has a very positive effect on all students. ABC students motivate other students to do well in school and develop a positive attitude about life.

Academic performance is recognized in a number of ways. High honor students are recognized for their achievements at an annual banquet. Outstanding Scholastic Accomplishment Awards for students not in the honors programs are presented at special ceremonies twice a year. Parents are invited to attend.

A variety of evidence attests to the success of Radnor's program. Over the past two years, S.A.T. scores increased by 42 points. In 1984, the school claimed 29 National Merit Scholars, more than any school in Pennsylvania, and 18 National Merit Scholar Commendations. One-hundred percent of the students who took Advanced Placement tests scored three or higher in all but one subject area in both 1983 and 1984. In addition, students received a number of awards in jour-

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nalism, photography, debate and forensics, the arts, mathematics, and science.

Student Participation and Programs

Students at Radnor are provided an opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities which complement the school's academic offerings and help to further a majority of the school's overall goals.

The Student Activities Program offers more than 130 separate teams, clubs, and organizations, including athletics (interscholastic and intramural), government, music (vocal and instrumental), drama, speech, publications, service clubs, and interest activities. Time is set aside each week during the school day for these activities, though some meet after school or evenings.

The program is administered by members of the teaching staff who serve on a part time basis as intramural director, athletic director, and director of student affairs. The director of student affairs conducts regular leadership workshops and activities to encourage student involvement. By the time they have graduated, 100% of the students have participated in one or more extra-curricular activities.

Students regularly participate in the school's decision-making process and contribute to proposed rules and regulations. Two student representatives sit on the Board of School Directors. In addition, there is a 40-member student council, 16 class officers, and 64 homeroom representatives. Student leaders participate in monthly town meetings, the Principal's Advisory Committee, and the Superintendent's Advisory Council.

Radnor also offers an Alternatives to Study program which grants students, with parental permission, the opportunity to use the library, work with teachers, socialize in specified areas, and meet with counselors during unassigned time. Any suspension automatically terminates Alternatives to Study privileges. The popularity of this program promotes positive student behavior. In addition, students have negotiated an open campus at lunch time, with off-campus privileges increasing with age. Students demonstrate a growing sense of responsibility as they learn to manage unassigned time and demonstrate a respect for each other and teachers.

Dedicated and Involved Staff

Teachers at Radnor are involved in policy on instruction, curriculum, discipline, and evaluation.

Department chairpersons and teachers develop the entire curriculum, including objectives, content, and evaluation. A planned schedule of curricular revision occurs in each subject area every five years. The district provides release time and summer employment for this purpose. The teachers also develop course descriptions which are distributed annually to parents.

The principal places a strong emphasis on trust and recognizes his teachers as professionals. He holds Open Office for teachers one day each week so faculty can discuss a concern or drop in to talk. The Faculty Forum, a committee of elected teacher representatives, meets bimonthly with the principal to work out mutual concerns. In addition, there are monthly faculty meetings on school-wide instructional issues, and the principal often attends individual department meetings.

Teachers at Radnor go out of their way to help students be all that they can be. The student orientation of the school is reflected in the day-to-day relationship between classroom instructors and the students. The students' exceptional pride in the school is attributed to the staff and the administration.

There are many ways teachers are recognized and appreciated at Radnor. Teacher of the year awards are given. Both the principal and the superintendent send special letters of commendation to excellent teachers all during the year. Parents have monthly coffees and an annual picnic to show appreciation.

Teachers feel good about what is happening at Radnor. Turnover of staff has been minimal; once employed, most professionals dedicate themselves to a career in the school.

Parent/Community Support and Participation

Both parents and the community are involved in Radnor High School life to an unusual degree.

Parents participate with teachers and students on over 41 school committees. The school has a strong Parent-Teacher-Student Association, parent councils at each grade level, and a Parent Volunteer Program which manages 12 committees for grade level activities, public relations, student recognition, drug and alcohol abuse, fine arts, and college admissions.

Radnor fosters a strong relationship with community groups. In addition to ongoing work with local government agencies, churches, and businesses, the school has cooperative arrangements with the local Teen Center, Senior Center, Rotary Club, Police Athletic League, and the community library. Under a policy established in 1970, hundreds of community organizations have used school classrooms, gyms, and swimming pool for their activities. Of particular note is Main Line School Night, a non-profit, privately administered organization which offers over 50 courses each semester.

With the strong support of the community, Radnor's budgetary problems have been kept to a minimum and the educational program has always been well financed. The school has been able to maintain its staff-pupil ratio of 1:12. The school has improved building maintenance and upgraded cafeteria, auditorium, and library facilities. As a result of a team effort between community booster groups and the school board, a new athletic field complex is nearly complete. The school leadership believes that the unusually positive attitude of the student body can be directly attributed to community and parent support.

The Future

Radnor believes strongly in maintaining a program of continual improvement in all areas. The staff believes that it is necessary to evaluate school offerings on a regular basis and to make appropriate changes. Radnor will continue to be a school where excellence is encouraged, where a positive learning environment is maintained, and where trust and respect are part of everyday life.

For More Information Contact:
Radnor High School
130 King of Prussia Road
Radnor, PA 19087
215/293-0855

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SANDY RUN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dresher, Pennsylvania

"The unique climate of Sandy Run Middle School can best be described as cooperative, friendly, stimulating, and spirited. These feelings are fostered by a combination of trust, mutuality of commitment, and productive interaction. A great deal of forethought and planning went into the creation of this atmosphere, although no one anticipated how successful the results would be." Principal

Sandy Run Middle School is located in Dresher, Pennsylvania (population 22,947), a suburb north of Philadelphia. It is part of the Upper Dublin School District, which also includes three elementary schools and a senior high school. Sandy Run serves 775 students in grades 6-8. Approximately 83% of the students are white, 11% are black, and 6% are Asian. Slightly over 11% come from low-income families.

Sandy Run's faculty includes 47 classroom teachers (five part-time), two subject specialists, one library/media specialist, and two counselors. The faculty is supported by three teacher aides, four clerical staff, and nine food service personnel (one part-time). There are two administrators, the principal and an assistant principal.

Building a Middle School

Faced with steadily declining enrollment, a newly organized Upper Dublin School Board voted in December 1981 to close a secondary school building and establish, by September 1982, a 6-8 middle school and a 9-12 high school. This decision left district and school leadership eight months to plan and reorganize the district. An administrative team, with experience in planning the 1977 district reorganization, immediately developed a detailed calendar of critical decisions. This calendar was widely publicized to inform both the staff and the community of the process which the district would follow in planning the "new" schools.

To clarify leadership responsibilities, one of the first decisions was to assign the middle school principal. Of equal importance was the early assignment of school staff. Individual staff preferences were identified, and these received the highest consideration. Assignments were made rapidly, so that both the principal and the staff were able to participate fully in the planning process.

Delivering a Child-Centered Program

Sandy Run's program is rooted in the characteristics and needs of students aged 10-14. Its goal is to help them to mature intellectually, creatively, emotionally, socially, ethically, and physically, and to develop their unique attitudes, abilities, and interests. It seeks to provide an environment in which the student, rather than the program, is most important, and in which all students have the opportunity to succeed.

To deliver a child-centered program, the staff is organized into teams of three to five teachers who work with an established group of 75 to 100 students, their parents, and a guidance counselor. This organizational format centers the guidance/discipline functions within the team and fosters close interpersonal relationships among staff, students, and parents; provides opportunities for students to interact with other students of differing backgrounds and abilities; and enhances professional support and camaraderie among team teachers. The team format also supports greater consistency in curriculum, while providing flexibility in the scheduling of time, and in placing students in appropriate learning groups. All students are required to take three years of English, math, social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and computer literacy; two years of health, practical arts, and reading; and one year of study skills, library science, and spelling/vocabulary. Students are also required to participate in environmental/outdoor education and planetarium programs. Foreign language is optional in the eighth grade. In addition, quarterly electives, scheduled twice a week, allow students to select from a wide

variety of activities of special appeal to their age group.

Study skills are emphasized in all three grades. In sixth grade, all students learn library skills and practice a research method known as "capsule reporting," which involves both language arts and social studies. Seventh and eighth graders expand their research skills through projects which emphasize organization, note taking, test taking, and work habits, as well as comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking.

Basic skills are taught through continuous progress programs, and the school uses a mastery testing program in both reading and mathematics. Students must perform successfully before they progress to the next level. Remedial classes are provided in math, reading, and English at all grade levels, and in social studies and science in 7th and 8th grade. All teams are available before and after school, and offer weekly clinics for students who need individual help.

Sandy Run's comprehensive gifted program serves 26% of the school's students. This program provides opportunities for students to work in enrichment and accelerated classes in all basic subject areas. In eighth grade, students choose one or two fields of interest for a year of specialized study.

Sandy Run believes the school should strike a balance between concern for the students' academic development and concern for their social development. To achieve this balance, the school offers a wealth of co-curricular activities.

The student council, composed of elected representatives of each homeroom, plans school events such as Teacher Appreciation Day, dances, and school spirit events; nominates activities for Interest Day and Fun Nights; and operates the school store. All students participate in the intramural program where color-coded teams compete in a variety of sports. Hundreds of students participate in the annual school play. There is a school newspaper, yearbook, and literary magazine. Students also participate in community activities, including special fund-raisers for specific causes, and the annual Law Day, when they serve as township and district officials.

A variety of evidence suggests that the Sandy Run program is working for students. Data from standardized tests and Pennsylvania's Educational Quality Assessment demonstrate that the school is performing within or above its predicted band, which is based on community characteristics. The students have received awards and recognition in a variety of academic, vocational, and co-curricular areas. The school has won so many first place prizes at the Montgomery County Science Fair that the trophy was retired to the school. Represented by 130 students, Sandy Run was rated the number one middle school in Pennsylvania in the Atlantic-Pacific Math League competition. Students have also received awards for the literary magazine, music competitions, art shows, and athletic performance.

The school's success is also apparent in its scores on the affective sections of the state's Educational Quality Assessment. Over 80% of the students responded that they were very interested in school and learning, spend at least one hour on homework each night, and perceive that their parents believe that the school is doing a good job.

Involved Staff

One of the major components of Sandy Run's success is the warmth, commitment, and multi-faceted talents of its professional staff. Considerable staff input was instrumental in building the middle school and the teaming concept. Staff who were selected for Sandy Run wanted to be part of what they felt would be a challenging and exciting experience.

The administration gives top priority to maintaining the staff's high intensity. It involves staff in policy decisions, encourages flexibility among teams, fosters individuality, and advocates innovation and variety in instruction. Teams meet regularly to plan curriculum, and staff from all levels meet to coordinate content material. To a large degree, teachers plan their own staff development programs.

The teachers value the role they have been given at Sandy Run. The results of Pennsylvania's Educational Quality Assessment show that 97% feel they have input in solving administrative problems, 97% feel that they have control over curriculum and instruction, and 100% feel they have the freedom to develop and use teaching techniques that enable them to be effective with their students.

Committed Parents/ Supportive Community

The school's relationship with parents is one of mutual respect and productive interdependence. The strong parent-teacher organization is regularly involved in the school's program, with ideas, funds, and services. Parents actively participate as speakers for both enrichment and regular classes, and for the school's Interest Day. They serve as volunteers in the outdoor environmental program and for a multi-ethnic foods day. They sponsor assembly programs and chaperone dances. Parents also work behind the scenes to support new programs, to respond to school concerns, and to promote administrative policies. The principal hosts a lunch for parents once a month, and arranges opportunities for parents to meet with Board members and other educational decision-makers.

The Future

The principal sees declining enrollment as a continuing problem for the next few years. He also believes that a more extensive effort to maintain the physical facility will be required. Of greatest interest is staff development. He sees his continuing task as stimulating and supporting his staff in ways which will result in "everyone giving a 180-day effort."

For More Information Contact:
Sandy Run Middle School
520 Twining Road
Dresher, PA 19025
215/576-3251

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THE BALDWIN SCHOOL

Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

"The belief that women have minds just as logical, just as incisive, just as profound, and just as creative as men's minds with the concomitant belief that women deserve a challenging, stimulating education which will prepare them for serious careers are convictions that have become not less, but more compelling, with the passage of time." Principal

The Baldwin School is set on a twenty-five acre campus in the suburban community of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. Baldwin is a college-preparatory, non-sectarian girls' school organized on a K-12 basis. The Upper School has an enrollment of 190 students attending grades nine through twelve. Students are selected primarily on the basis of individual aptitude tests. Baldwin's student body is 92% white with 5% black, and 3% Asian. Fifteen percent of the students receive school aid.

Baldwin employs two full-time and four part-time administrators, 20 full-time and 21 part-time teachers, three part-time counselors, three media professionals, and four part-time special service personnel. Most of the upper school's teachers also serve Baldwin's middle school.

Strong Traditions

Baldwin School will celebrate its centennial in 1988. For nearly 100 years, it has aspired to create in each student the ability and the enthusiasm to continue growing as a scholar, a woman, and a human being. Every teacher in every classroom, every administrator, every activity the school supports, attempts to convey to the student the school's belief in excellence.

The school is housed in a Victorian building which was originally a resort hotel, later a boarding school, and now a day school. The building conveys the character of the school: its concern for history; its valuing of the individual, the idiosyncratic, the unusual; and its belief that "wealth is not as important as ideas."

The Curriculum

Baldwin believes that the process of building a fine school never stops. This belief is reflected in the work of the school's curriculum committee which includes representatives of all departments and the administration. The Committee meets twice a month to discuss instructional issues and policies. It also considers ideas and proposals for program changes, which can be presented by any member of the faculty. The committee investigates these proposals, and then makes recommendations to the faculty at large. The faculty subsequently votes on whether to accept them.

As a result, Baldwin's fourteen academic departments present a wide range of innovative courses and practices. For example, the English department has instituted a system of individual conferences at which students regularly meet with their teachers to address problems in their written work or to plan future papers. From the teachers' perspective, these conferences are as intense as private tutoring sessions, and provide an opportunity to work closely on each student's specific writing needs. In addition, the department operates a writing laboratory for those students who need more time and assistance in acquiring critical writing skills.

The school's science program which includes physics, chemistry, biology and environmental science, is taught primarily through laboratory investigation. All science classes emphasize discovery, participation, and problem solving, and require a minimum of memorization and library research. The success of this method can be seen in the fact that 95% of the student body elect to take advanced science courses.

Baldwin's efforts in multicultural education have taken a similar approach. In English classes, as well as two courses entitled "Individual in Culture and Society" and "Religion and the Individual," students explore elements in human experiences through role playing, dramatic acting and examining personal journals. Through such classes, Baldwin students are able to investigate personally similarities and differences in human experiences as manifest in different times and places.

Baldwin's curriculum includes a multi-level art program taught by practicing artists, a comprehensive theater program

taught by a professional dramatist and involving two major productions each year, and a music program in which 60% of the students participate and which has resulted in performances at Philadelphia's Academy of Music and Haverford's Centennial Hall.

Baldwin requires all students to take physical education each of the trimesters. Its interscholastic program is exceptional in that it is a participation-based, no-cut program. Girls are ranked by athletic ability and placed on corresponding squads. As many squads are created as there are interested girls.

Baldwin also provides college opportunities for students who have completed sequential offerings in math, language and science, or who have requested further enrichment. College programs are available to Baldwin students at Bryn Mawr College (across the street), Moore College of Art, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Community Service

To enhance educational activities present in Baldwin's regular curriculum, the school has developed opportunities for students to participate in learning experiences outside of the classroom. All members of Baldwin's student body belong to the Service League, a program which urges each student to provide services to the school or community as aides in hospitals, old age homes, or tutoring programs. Last year, Baldwin students worked a total of 4,518 hours for the Service League. In addition, a work program includes services to the school library and bookstore, work in Baldwin's lower school, or work outside the school in hospitals, old age homes, or tutoring programs.

Career Education

Baldwin makes use of its extensive alumnae network to provide career information and experiences for the student body. Biennially, alumnae sponsor a Career Day when graduates return to the campus to discuss their professions. In addition to the formal presentation, Baldwin students can search out at lunch alumnae employed in fields of particular interest. During the conference, students are given a booklet containing the addresses, phone numbers, and job information of all participants and are encouraged to make further contact as professional interests develop. These booklets are often used at the end of the senior year, when students are required to develop and conduct projects in particular fields of employment, and then present the findings orally to the entire school on a day set aside for that purpose.

Co-Curricular Programs

Baldwin students have a great deal of autonomy in creating co-curricular programs. Students discuss their interests among themselves, then seek a faculty advisor, then finally see the director of studies for approval. Through this process, student interests which cannot be accommodated into the classroom structure can be met in smaller group situations. For example, recently, several 10th grade students realized that they could not fit a Modern European History course into their busy grade schedule and requested to meet as a group on a monthly basis; these students formed MESH, Modern European Special History, designed to allow students to discuss selected readings in this area. Another group of students have begun the International Foods Club, which conducts a spring food festival. The Contemporary Club sponsors debates and round table discussions on topics of current interest to the student body such as nuclear war, American policy and the Soviet Union, or evolution versus creation. This year, an active model U.N. will have 20 students representing five countries; Afghanistan, Cuba, Brazil, Israel and Japan. Through such clubs, Baldwin students develop skills in organization, delegation, and follow-through and leadership, while simultaneously investigating topics of current interest and importance.

Special Programs

Baldwin has designed several special programs which allow students to expand their interests. A two-year program, entitled "Women Creating," has been funded by a grant from Glenmede Trust and is designed to introduce the Baldwin students and community to outstanding women in creative endeavors. The programs consisted of ten assemblies, six of which were followed by master classes and four weekend workshops. Guests at the assemblies have included a radio interviewer, a composer of electronic music, a playwrite-author, a painter, a Nobel prize-winning nuclear physicist, a judge, an authority on sharks, a woman who works with autistic children, a psychologist concerned with bio-medical ethics, and a Baldwin graduate who has authored several books on Italy. Workshops have included sessions on drama, drawing, clay, peacemaking, dance, creative writing, fabric, film making, chamber music, religion, ecology, and the art of storytelling. The final spring weekend workshop included sessions on architecture and cooking as well as the performance of a six-minute piece commissioned from a composer for Baldwin's chorus and ensemble. As a final part of the program, students designed and created a clay wall relief for the library and produced a fifteen minute video for local cable television on Women Creating.

The Future

Baldwin is proud of the success of its program. One hundred percent of its students go on to four-year colleges, many with scholarships and other academic awards. Yet, Baldwin believes that the business of education is continuous development. It is currently implementing a five-year plan for improvement which will culminate in its centennial celebration in 1988. That plan addresses the ongoing search for talented girls of diverse backgrounds, the need to increase the school's endowment, and the continuing challenge of making the physical plant energy efficient.

For More Information Contact:
The Baldwin School
Morris and Montgomery Avenues
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010
215/525-2700

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THE BRYN MAWR SCHOOL

Baltimore, Maryland

"It is almost a given that a part of our ethos comes from our historical and present commitment to girls. Our belief that anything is possible for our girls — that they can and will change their world for the better — is the basis of that ethos. More particularly, the ethos of Bryn Mawr stems from a classical balance between high standards of academic excellence and a deep caring for each individual student. As in any balance, the two weigh against one another and are therefore sometimes in conflict. It is this conflict, or creative tension, that makes the Bryn Mawr School a vital and growing institution." Headmistress

The Bryn Mawr School was founded in 1885 as the nation's first independent college preparatory school for girls. Located in suburban Baltimore, Maryland, it now serves 582 girls in kindergarten through grade 12 and provides an individualized day care program for 58 preschoolers through its Little School. Its student body is drawn from the diverse communities of the greater Baltimore region.

Bryn Mawr's Upper School has an enrollment of 216 students in grades 9-12. Admission is based on tests, previous school records, interviews, and recommendations. Tuition is $4,950 per year. About 89% of Upper School students are white, 5% are black, 5% are Asian, and 1% are Hispanic. Two percent of the students come from low-income families and 18% receive some form of financial aid for tuition.

The Upper School faculty includes 25 classroom teachers (four part-time), two library/media personnel (one part-time), three part-time educational specialists, and five part-time counselors. The faculty is supported by four food service staff (for the entire school), one clerical staff person, and 13 buildings and grounds personnel who care for the entire school. The administration includes the Headmistress of Bryn Mawr School, the Director of the Upper School, and the Director of Student Activities.

Historical Tradition

The Bryn Mawr School was founded by five young feminist women as a preparatory school for Bryn Mawr College. The mission of the College was to offer young women a program of study more rigorous than that of the most prestigious men's colleges. The mission of the Bryn Mawr School was to prove that girls could be taught as much or more than boys.

Bryn Mawr School today reflects the classical and pioneering spirit of its founders. It seeks to foster the development of the intellect in the humanistic tradition, the appreciation of diversity in people, and the importance of physical and spiritual well-being. It offers girls a rigorous education characterized by attention to the individual in a lively, supportive environment. It encourages critical thinking, creative expression, a sense of discovery, and community involvement. Bryn Mawr expects its students to become responsible, confident, happy participants in their pursuits, and to seek truth, beauty, and wisdom.

Ethos of Excellence

One of Bryn Mawr's greatest strengths has been and continues to be the excellence of its academic program. Both the school and individual students have been recognized in areas such as foreign language, science, music, and writing. In the past six years, 62 Bryn Mawr students have been cited in the National Merit Scholar program. One-hundred percent of Bryn Mawr students are accepted into four-year college or university programs upon graduation.

Foreign language study begins in kindergarten with French, and eighth grade students are required to take Latin and a modern language. Upper School students are required to complete three years of one language or two years of two languages. Offerings include Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, and German.

In the sciences, Bryn Mawr offers honors and regular courses in physical science, chemistry, physics, and biology.

Two years of science are required, but 80% of the students elect one or more additional courses. The school assists the ablest students to secure science internships at local universities or in the private sector.

Bryn Mawr is widely known for the scope of its computer program. Computer education is included in the mathematics curriculum, and electives in advanced BASIC and Pascal are available. The school maintains a fully equipped computer laboratory and a small humanities computer center in the library. Many students use this center for foreign language projects as well as to develop writing and editing skills in word processing.

To encourage the study of mathematics, Bryn Mawr has established the Math Mentor Program with Goucher College. Goucher math and computer science majors visit the campus daily to act as role models for Bryn Mawr girls. They supervise computer clubs and math study hall, work on individual projects with students, and act as informal career advisers.

Bryn Mawr's arts and humanities curriculum continues to be strong. All students are required to take art and music, and may perform in the choir, an acapella singing group, and a string ensemble. Private lessons on eight instruments are available. All students participate in European folk dancing, a tradition at the school. Dramatic productions are produced in cooperation with neighboring Gilman School for boys.

A program of cross registration with Gilman School has increased the variety of course offerings at both schools. For example, Spanish is taught at Gilman; German is taught at Bryn Mawr. Qualified Bryn Mawr students also take classes at Johns Hopkins University and the Peabody Institute.

Ethos of Caring

In recent years, Bryn Mawr has taken specific steps to meet its students' personal and character development needs and to establish itself as a caring community.

It began by creating two new administrative positions: a Director of the Upper School, to provide one administrator with primary responsibility for Upper School people and programs; and a part-time Director of Student Life, to give attention to that aspect of the school.

With the support of the faculty, the new Director of the Upper School instituted a faculty adviser system. Each student is assigned a faculty adviser who serves as her advocate and acts as liaison between the school and home. The advisers also assist with peer support groups where students share problems and solutions in informal settings. Chief advisers for each grade meet once a week with the director to discuss student progress.

Bryn Mawr involves the students in decisions which affect their lives at the school. Every student is a member of the Student Government Association. Representatives elected from each grade plan student activities, monitor school rules, and serve on Board of Trustee committees. Town Meetings, held with the Middle School, give students an opportunity to voice their opinions on issues such as the honor system, alcohol abuse, and program changes.

Bryn Mawr believes that rituals are important to the spirit of school life. All-school convocations are held to reinforce the feeling of belonging and to heighten students' awareness of their social responsibility. Convocation programs address moral and ethical issues such as hunger, the environment, nuclear policy, the ERA, and racial justice.

All students are encouraged to serve the school community. Upper School students have an on-campus work assignment each year to enhance their sense of responsibility. These jobs range from helping with younger students in the Little School to washing blackboards.

Bryn Mawr students also participate in community service. Individual students spend one school afternoon each week tutoring in the Baltimore City School District, visiting nursing home residents, or working in recreational programs at neighborhood hospitals. Each class has adopted an emergency food center or shelter for which it collects food and other necessities. All school service activities include conducting walk-a-thons for charities, serving as huggers and scorekeepers for the Special Olympics, and fund-raising.

Faculty

The Bryn Mawr faculty uphold the academic standards of the school and daily administer care and attention to individual students in their keeping. The faculty can be identified by their intellectual excitement, both individually and as a group. They regularly question themselves and one another about the meaning and methods of their teaching and the material they are presenting. They support one another professionally and personally. They are a closely knit and cohesive group.

Bryn Mawr recognizes the importance of supporting and encouraging faculty to continue their education. The school has received a substantial grant earmarked for faculty development which is used for in-service meetings as well as to support individual faculty in course work and conferences. Faculty members are also encouraged to make presentations both at the school and outside.

The Future

Bryn Mawr faces three major challenges. The first is fiscal and involves obtaining sufficient funds to fulfill its commitment to racial and socioeconomic diversity, to keep faculty salaries competitive, and to continue improvements of the physical plant. The second challenge is to maintain its place in the crowded market of Baltimore independent schools. The final challenge is the need to define continually the most effective college preparatory curriculum for its students. Here, Bryn Mawr seeks to give young women the skills they need to go out into an increasingly complex and dangerous world to lead happy and fruitful lives and to change that world for the better.

For More Information Contact:
The Bryn Mawr School
109 W. Melrose Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21210
301/323-8800

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THE GILMAN SCHOOL

Baltimore, Maryland

"To the extent that an organization strives to be the best that it can be, to the extent that an educational institution appreciates the quality of the raw materials it has to work with and tries to develop all aspects of each student's potential through challenging academic, athletic, extracurricular, community service, and human development programs that stress integrity, morality, service, and dedication — to these extents we try to be second to no other school in our efforts." Assistant Headmaster

The Gilman School is a private day school for boys in Baltimore, Maryland. Founded in 1897, the school is set on a 67 acre campus on the northern edge of the city. The campus includes seven school and maintenance buildings, over 20 faculty residences, and extensive playing fields. Tuition is $4,950 per year.

Gilman's Upper School enrolls 410 boys in grades 9-12. Approximately 78% of the students are white, 10% are black, 9% are Asian, and 3% are Hispanic. Five percent of the students come from low-income families. Fifteen percent of the students receive some form of financial aid for tuition.

Gilman's faculty includes 45 classroom teachers (seven part-time), four library/media specialists, one counseling specialist, and one special service person. The instructional staff is supported by 14 clerical staff, 10 buildings and grounds personnel, four food service workers, and approximately 120 parent volunteers. The administration includes five full-time and 3.5 part-time personnel, many of whom are shared with Gilman's Lower and Middle schools. All chief administrators teach part-time. The head of the Upper School and all teachers are coaches. In addition, each teacher serves as a counselor to 10-12 boys.

Gilman's Philosophy

The Gilman School is dedicated to helping students prepare for college, and for a life of involvement and service. It subscribes to the spiritual and ethical values of the Judeo-Christian tradition, to a belief in God, and to the dignity and worth of each individual. Gilman considers character, integrity, self-respect, and concern for others to be of central importance.

Gilman's programs seek to encourage students to develop a self-motivating interest in learning and to help them acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to think rationally, critically, and independently. Its extra-curricular activities promote self-expression, responsibility, and cultivation of aesthetic tastes and accomplishment. The athletic program is designed to promote physical fitness and enjoyment, self-discipline, and, above all, sportsmanship.

Through a diverse student body and faculty, Gilman seeks to expose its students to broad intellectual and cultural opportunities, and to promote positive human relationships as well as an understanding and appreciation of human differences.

Academic Achievement

Gilman's program requires all students to take four years of English and physical education; three years of mathematics, foreign language, and computer literacy; and two years of social studies, science, the arts, and religion. To enlarge the scope and variety of course offerings, Gilman shares some classes with nearby Bryn Mawr School.

Approximately 75% of Gilman students are enrolled in honors or advanced placement English, 65% in social studies, 30% in mathematics, 25% in foreign language, 18% in the arts, and 15% in science. In addition, qualified students may take courses at Johns Hopkins and Towson State Universities, Loyola College, and Peabody Conservatory.

Each department at Gilman reviews its curriculum and instruction on a yearly basis. Changes are discussed at faculty

meetings and at meetings of the Executive Committee of department heads and administrators. The faculty also meets daily for Chambers, a 15-minute session which allows for continuous communication across grades and subject matters. These exchanges have resulted in joint ventures in History-English, in Art-Music and Music-English, and in expanded art, music, and industrial arts programs.

Nearly 100% of Gilman's students enroll in college or university programs upon graduation. Over the past 15 years, Gilman students have scored an average of 551 in verbal and 619 in mathematics on the SAT. Gilman's students traditionally do well on Advanced Placement Examinations—for example, in 1983, its graduating seniors took 144 examinations, and 86% of them received a score of 3 or higher. Similarly, Gilman's seniors have performed well in national competitions. In 1983, nearly 14% of them (13 students) were National Merit Scholars.

Moral Development and Social Responsibility

The development of moral judgment, values, ethics, and social responsibility pervades every aspect of Gilman's programs. Of particular significance is the school's human and moral values program. The program involves students, faculty, trustees, parents, and alumni in a series of events around a chosen theme. The Human Relations Program has addressed issues in race relationships, the climate that allowed the Holocaust to occur, and Ghandi's philosophy of nonviolent resistance to correct social injustices.

Community Service

Gilman's ethos revolves around the interdependence of all people, around respect for and understanding of differences between religions and races, and around the importance of integrity, self-respect, compassion, and discipline. The school's community service program provides opportunities to put these concepts into practice.

The goals of the program are to help the students become conscious of people in need, to realize the complexity of their problems; and to begin the process of evaluating their own values, perceptions, attitudes, and feelings towards those in need.

All students are required to commit a minimum of one trimester to work in one of more than 60 different agencies and programs, including hospitals, disease research and assistance foundations, nursing homes, service organizations, libraries, and historical societies. Each student keeps a journal during his period of service and meets every three weeks with the director of the program to discuss his experiences. From 60 to 70 students are involved in community service work at any one time.

Many students are involved in Greengrass, a project which brings inner city youngsters to the Gilman campus for recreational activities. Gilman also works with the Special Olympics and Upward Bound.

Finally, all students are considered part of the school's work force. Every student is assigned to a job having to do with maintaining and/or operating the school during the course of a school year.

Community School

Over the past 25 years, Gilman has placed increasing emphasis on becoming a true community school by working to attract a school population that is representative of the Baltimore community. Admissions personnel, teachers, parents, alumni, trustees, and friends of the school have all worked to inform an increasingly larger proportion of the community about the school. The campaign includes personal interviews, testing procedures, visits to potential "feeder" schools, advertising, open houses, and drives to raise money for financial aid. Gilman now has a minority enrollment of 22%, and its students represent a broader range of socio-economic, religious, and ethnic groups than at any other time in the school's 88 years.

The Future

In the past few years, Gilman has increased its financial aid to students by 56%. However, because of tuition increases during this same period, real aid has increased much less. Gilman is committed to not merely staying even, but meeting more fully the financial needs of families who want to send their sons to the school.

Though the school has experienced considerable success in attracting highly qualified minority students from the city, it has been less successful in recruiting qualified minority teachers. Nevertheless, it is continuing to work with agencies which may help it identify and attract strong minority candidates to the school.

The school has made progress in improving its salary and benefits structure, yet cost of living increases require that regular campaigns be conducted to sustain current gains.

For More Information Contact:
The Gilman School
5407 Roland Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21210
301/323-3800

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THE PARK SCHOOL OF BALTIMORE

Brooklandville, Maryland

"Park School does not so much try harder as try differently. What we offer is a clear and coherent philosophy which focuses on the needs and abilities of the individual student in a most positive and supportive manner . . . the primary ethos of the school is trust between adults and students. However, spirit does not test well in the market place; myth is of value only to those on the inside. It needs success of the institution by the standards of others. Our success in conventional terms strengthens and preserves our distinctive ethos." Principal

The Park School of Baltimore is a private, coeducational school founded in 1912 and located on wooded acreage in suburban Brooklandville, Maryland. It accepts students of strong academic ability, personal strengths, commitment, and creativity whose families understand and support Park's philosophy. Tuition is $5,095 for 9th grade, and $5,195 for grades 10-12.

Park's Upper School serves 213 students in grades 9-12. Approximately 94% of the students are white, 5% are black, and fewer than 1% are Hispanic, Native American, and Asian. Slightly more than 3% of the students come from low income families, but 23% receive partial or full scholarships.

Park's Upper School faculty includes 25 full-time and six part-time classroom teachers, two library/media personnel (one part-time), a half-time special services person, and one counselor. The faculty is supported by two clerical staff (one part-time) and two buildings and grounds personnel. Four teachers also serve as part-time administrators, assisting the Headmaster and Upper School Principal as class advisers. All faculty members serve as advisers to individual students.

Ethos of Trust

In both its tradition and its daily practice, the Park School embodies two assumptions: that human beings are capable of rational self-discipline, generosity, kindness, moral conviction, and concern for others; and that learning is an expression of positive energies and fulfills natural curiosity and impulse.

This philosophy suggests or requires no single educational technique or methodology. The work of Park School is sustained by the faith that the child possesses inner strength, talents, and powers which can be liberated and nurtured. The teacher's authority as an adult and a scholar should be used to provide the skills, opportunities, challenges, and the encouragement that brings about responsible freedom in students.

Park School's objective is to offer a flexible curriculum and a rich, varied program of studies and activities which teach skills and encourage character traits which enable successful achievement in a constantly changing society. The school seeks to foster individuality and encourages students to strike a balance between competition for success and learning as a lifelong, fulfilling process.

These values reflect the aspirations of the original founders of Park School. Today, they remain at the center of its educational program and allow the school to serve as a community of those who understand and endorse its philosophy as a basis for the education of their children.

Fostering Independence and Social Responsibility

Park School believes that if students are valued, trusted, and respected, they will mature with the ability to value, trust, and respect others. It seeks to develop independence and encourage social responsibility by fostering students' self-esteem and by providing them with opportunities to make responsible choices.

The basic rules at Park are few and simple: regular class attendance, no drugs or alcohol during school or at school functions, and conformity to driving regulations. For the rest, Park urges responsible choice based on the principles of honesty and integrity, respect for the rights of others, and responsibility to the commu-

nity. Park students choose their own advisers, work out their own programs, control the use of their own time during free periods, and choose whether or not to participate in activities, teams, and committees.

All students participate in the Community Service program which requires 40 hours of service to the school community before graduation and involves everyone in 20 minutes of clean-up in the school each day. The Learner-Teacher program encourages leadership and responsibility by providing students with the opportunity to serve as lab assistants, tutors, and physical education assistants.

A number of students are involved in a variety of outreach activities. The Care Centers committee gives parties for residents of a home for the mentally handicapped and visits hospitals. The Saturday Enrichment committee provides tutoring in the basic skills to inner-city elementary students. The Outdoor Education program offers local public school classes an opportunity to spend a day on the Challenge Course, built and maintained by Park School students who also serve as instructors.

The School Council, composed of both students and faculty, oversees these and other activities, including program review, assemblies, ecology, community involvement, and house and ground. In addition, each class elects officers and plans service, social, and fund-raising activities. Students appointed by the Council to the program review committee attend all departmental meetings and serve on the Faculty Curriculum Committee. The president of the School Council is an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees.

Many academic courses attend directly to ethical and moral concerns and ways of thinking about them: atoms to atom bombs, sexual health and decision making, philosophy, literature of minorities, and literature of the Holocaust among others. These courses are guided by respect for the views of others and recognition of complexity rather than easy polarization.

Success in Conventional Terms

Park School's philosophy and its ethos of trust derive from its tradition and define its distinctiveness. However, Park realizes that it must also succeed in conventional terms, through empirical measures of performance. Park has such empirical measures. Its students routinely achieve a mean of 525 or higher on both the verbal and math portions of the SAT, and the school has 10 or more commended or semi-finalist National Merit Scholars each year. All Park students are admitted to a four-year college or university program upon graduation.

All students at Park are required to take four years of English and physical education, three years of social studies, two years of math, science, and foreign language, and four trimesters in the arts. The arts curriculum includes both academic and performing courses in music, drama, dance, photography, painting, drawing, ceramics, and so forth. Very talented Park students may take advanced mathematics courses at a nearby college and dance or instrumental music at Peabody Conservatory.

Park is attempting to introduce more interdisciplinary courses into the curriculum. The science department has introduced courses in the behavioral sciences, along with several which explore the impact of scientific discoveries on society. The 9th grade is experimenting with a coordinated curriculum in history, English, and science. Math and science are incorporating the computer as a problem-solving tool and English composition classes are using word processing.

Park is also working to involve students more directly with the world beyond the school walls. Tenth graders spend a "Day in the World of Work," observing and interviewing people at work in a variety of settings. A junior work program extending over several weeks is in the planning stages. The firmly established Senior Term provides a culmination of intellectual, academic, and community activities. Seniors plan and execute an individual program which involves five weeks of full-time internship in the community and concludes with six weeks of study and service at Park, including a presentation to the entire student body.

To promote global awareness, Park has established two foreign exchange programs in which students and faculty spend three weeks in a foreign country, living and going to school with host families. Students from those countries then spend three weeks at Park School.

Park has a long tradition of strength in its guidance services. Every faculty member serves as an adviser to students. This relationship is frequently one of the more important in the student's experience. The four class principals work closely with both teachers and students to develop organization and group interaction skills and to support the advisers. College guidance is handled by a special counselor.

The Future

Park School's modern physical plant and sylvan setting contribute to the welfare and well-being of students and faculty, allow concentration on academic work, and strengthen the school's sense of community. These advantages, however, also challenge the school to avoid isolation from the realities of the outside world. To meet this challenge, the school is continuing its effort to diversify its student body and faculty so that it reflects the variety of classes and groups which make up the outside world. The school is also working to broaden its academic program so that it addresses the social, economic, and political realities of that world, and leaves the students confident in their power to live in that world and make a difference.

For More Information Contact:
The Park School of Baltimore
Old Court Road
Brooklandville, MD 21011
301/825-2351

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UPPER ST. CLAIR HIGH SCHOOL

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

"We have used the elements of openness and participatory management to create in our school community a sense of ownership . . . It has been our belief and has been our experience that once people participate in a decision, they feel more a part of it and 'own' it." Principal

Upper St. Clair High School is located in suburban Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and serves a community of 19,043. It is part of the Upper St. Clair School District, which also has two middle schools and three elementary schools.

Upper St. Clair has 1,556 students in grades 9-12. Approximately 98% of the students are white, slightly under 2% are Asian, and a small number are black and Hispanic. Less than 3% come from low-income families. Nearly 90% of Upper St. Clair students enroll in a two or four-year college program after graduation, and another 4% enroll in some form of vocational training.

The school's faculty includes 89 classroom teachers (eight part-time), two subject specialists, three library/media specialists (one part-time), and six counselors (one part-time). The faculty is supported by 17 teacher aides (one part-time), 10 clerical staff, 11 food service personnel (one part-time), and two security officers. There are five administrators.

Responding to the Community

Upper St. Clair serves an aggressively upward-mobile community which holds "private school expectations" for its public schools. These expectations create an environment which fosters school improvement efforts. It was not always so. In the late 1970s, support for the high school was very low. The community blamed the school for all of the students' problems, particularly problems related to the use of drugs and alcohol. In addition, many were opposed to the school's policy of off-campus privileges for 11th and 12th graders. A crisis point was reached when a group of 10th graders, truant from school, was involved in a traffic accident which resulted in a fatality.

In September 1979, the principal and the newly-appointed superintendent responded by establishing programs to involve the community in the high school and its programs, and by initiating a program to attack drug and alcohol abuse directly.

To provide a forum for parent involvement, the high school established a Parent-Teacher-Student-Organization (PTSO). The PTSO publishes a newsletter to keep parents informed, operates a "communiphone/hotline," and assists in school activities. The school also established a parents' advisory council to enlist all segments of the school community in addressing educational problems and issues.

School staff encouraged the community to observe the school in action. Community Day, initiated by the student council, provides an opportunity for adults to interact with students in a positive manner. Swap Day provides a chance for parents to trade places with their children and become students for a day. In addition, a business advisory committee was established to involve Pittsburgh area business and corporate leaders in the business education program of the school.

The involvement of the community in the school has allowed Upper St. Clair to monitor community concerns and expectations, and to solicit new ideas and directions. It has provided parents with a realistic perception of what the school can do, should do, and is doing. It has also resulted in a dramatic shift in community attitudes. Parents are especially supportive of the school, and their attitude has a positive effect on the students' perception of the school and its purposes.

Upper St. Clair attacked the problem of drug and alcohol abuse through a variety of activities. To increase community and staff awareness of the problem, the school hosted public meetings, organized parent groups, and conducted in-service seminars for teachers and counselors. To discourage drug and alcohol use on campus, two school police officers

were employed and the school established a working relationship with the municipal police. In addition, the school provided group and peer counseling sessions for students. An annual survey of drug and alcohol use among the students has become part of the school's ongoing evaluation of its improvement efforts. Upper St. Clair now has little, if any, drug use on campus, and the community recognizes the leadership role the school has played in combatting the problem.

Increasing Student Self-Esteem

Upper St. Clair has worked to increase students' self-esteem and, thereby, lessen the likelihood of their becoming involved with drugs and alcohol. This effort has addressed the school's climate, student involvement, discipline, and recognition of student achievement.

The school has worked to establish a climate where students are assumed to be trustworthy, responsible, and important, and are treated accordingly. Students have access to most school facilities when they are not scheduled for a class; these include resource centers, a student commons, and talk-and-study areas.

Students participate in all aspects of the school and influence school policies and decisions that affect them. The student council president reports monthly to the school board. Students serve on the board of the PTSO, and on the pupils advisory council which meets with the principal. Students are also invited to department meetings to offer input on the selection, evaluation, and development of curricular programs and serve on long-range planning committees.

Upper St. Clair has established a firm discipline code which blends student support and punitive measures. A team of counselors, administrators, the school nurse, and the director of psychological services reviews severe discipline problems. The school also has a peer counseling service in which students help others in their own age group.

Recognition of student performance is continuous. Student accomplishments are announced on classroom intercoms and publicized in the student newspaper, the district newsletter, and in the local papers. "Congratulation-grams" are sent to students from both teachers and administrators. A victory flag is unfurled when a varsity team wins or when a group or an individual attains an honor. The school board presents recognition certificates at its monthly meetings. There is an annual awards night for academic and extra-curricular accomplishments.

Strengthening the Academic Program

Upper St. Clair constantly reviews its academic program to strengthen the curriculum and insure that it meets new college entrance requirements. Courses of study are reviewed annually as part of the district's curriculum/instruction recommendation process. In this process, teachers meet bi-monthly by department with a curriculum leader, who submits their recommendations to a panel of K-12 curriculum supervisors. The panel reports to the district administration which then makes recommendations to the school board.

All students are required to take four years of English, three years of social studies, and two years of mathematics and science. Approximately 17% of Upper St. Clair students are enrolled in honors or advanced placement English and science, 16% in social studies, and 13% in math. Six percent of the students take a fifth year of foreign language study.

Resource centers are provided, in lieu of study halls, in all academic areas, including English, math, social studies, science, computers, foreign language, business education, and industrial arts. The centers are staffed by certified teachers who help any student who needs direction or enrichment. Remedial courses are provided for students (approximately 8%) who need to work on basic skills.

On the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress, Upper St. Clair sophomores' mean score gives the school a national percentile rank of 95. On the state's Educational Quality Assessment, students scored at the 99th percentile in all cognitive areas. In 1983, the school had the most National Merit semi-finalists of any school in Pennsylvania, a Presidential Scholar, and three finalists out of ten in a state writing contest. As of 1982 Upper St. Clair has had a higher percentage of its graduates (86%) attend college than any other public high school in Pennsylvania.

Developing Staff

Upper St. Clair has adopted a professional growth program which operates on a three-year cycle. The staff is divided into three clusters, each focusing on one topic for one school year. Each cluster is chaired by a teacher who plans and develops in-service programs on that topic for all the teachers in the cluster. At the end of each year, the clusters exchange topics. In the first cycle, clusters focused on drug and alcohol abuse, student motivation and achievement, and teacher performance through self-analysis. Teachers are also released from regular assignments to attend special workshops and other in-service programs.

The Future

Upper St. Clair has a dedicated and experienced teaching staff, a strong and receptive administration, highly motivated students, a successful academic program, a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and strong parent support. The school will continue to build on these strengths, striving to maintain educational excellence and to build on the community support which has been the key to its success.

For More Information Contact:
Upper St. Clair High School
185 McLaughlin Run Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15241
412/833-1600

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WELSH VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Narberth, Pennsylvania

"There is a strong bond between teachers and students . . ." Teachers

"The teachers treat us as adults . . ." "Teachers make sure we learn . . ." "They teach us, but in a way we teach them . . ." "We respect each other. You are respected for what you are, not just what you do." "One of the biggest things in this school is respect!" Students

Welsh Valley Middle School is located in Narberth, Pennsylvania, a "Main Line" suburb of Philadelphia. It is composed of five buildings connected by covered walkways, set on a 32-acre campus. The school is one of two middle schools in the Lower Merion School District, which also has five elementary schools and two high schools. Altogether, the district serves a community of 64,000.

Welsh Valley was converted from a junior high to a middle school in 1980 as part of the district's response to declining enrollment. It now serves 560 students in grades 6-8. Approximately 89% of the students are white, 8% are black, 2% are Asian, and 1% are Hispanic. Six percent come from low-income families.

The Welsh Valley faculty includes 44 classroom teachers (two part-time), two subject specialists, two counselors (one part-time), and one library/media specialist. The staff is supported by two teacher aides, five clerical staff, and six food service personnel. There are three administrators (one part-time). Forty-four staff members hold post-graduate degrees.

Welsh Valley has identified four elements which contribute to its success: a learning climate which fosters intellectual achievement; a dedicated, caring, professional staff; parental support and confidence; and enthusiastic student involvement.

Climate for Intellectual Achievement

Welsh Valley challenges each child to achieve maximum learning, whether the student is in the gifted program or in a special education resource room. The basic operating premise of the school is, "kids can achieve."

Welsh Valley seeks to foster each student's greatest possible intellectual growth through a well-rounded program. The program emphasizes continued development of communication skills; understanding and mastery of mathematics; increased knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of science and technology; and increased knowledge and understanding of the history of our nation, including its political and economic systems, and the values necessary for responsible citizenship. The program also includes the fine and practical arts; physical education and health; computer literacy; and foreign language study in French, Spanish, German, and Latin.

Welsh Valley uses standardized tests, past performance, and teacher recommendations to identify above-average (Level 1) students. The school expects these students to complete more than the basic course requirements or to accelerate into more advanced courses. Approximately 39% of the students are doing Level 1 work in English, 36% in social studies and science, 35% in math, and 31% in foreign language.

For students falling below grade level, Welsh Valley provides remedial classes in reading and mathematics. For students who are significantly below grade level, the school provides multi-grade classes. These classes range in size from 8 to 12 students and employ both a teacher and a teacher aide. All of these classes are taught using an individualized program.

The staff is organized into teams of teachers and counselors who work with specific groups of students. Team teachers plan together daily and are able to develop interdisciplinary units and team activities as well as to address the needs of individual students. Their meetings frequently involve specialist teachers who contribute to the development of coordinated plans for specific students.

On the Metropolitan Achievement Test,

Welsh Valley students consistently score mean grade equivalents two years above the national norms. Their achievements are recognized in other ways as well. Thirty-one eighth graders participate in the Montgomery County Mathematically Precocious Youth Program. Welsh Valley students placed third in the Pennsylvania Math League contest three years in a row. Twenty-two students were selected to submit projects for the Montgomery County Science Fair, six of these received awards, and two were invited to the Delaware Valley Science Fair.

Dedicated Staff

Welsh Valley has a staff of professionals who represent both elementary and secondary perspectives on education. They are dedicated to the educational program and to the students.

The teachers give freely of their time to meet with children and parents. In addition, over half of the staff serve as coaches or sponsor extra-curricular programs.

Teachers participate actively in the planning and management of the school and its programs. They elect representatives to a faculty advisory council which meets weekly with the principal to discuss issues and concerns related to all aspects of school life. Recently, for example, council deliberations led to a three-year effort to develop a grade 6 through 8 interdisciplinary curriculum on writing as well as a series of inservice workshops to help teachers implement it.

Teachers are involved in curriculum improvement through their teams and departments. Courses are reviewed both quarterly and annually by teachers and the administration. An in-depth evaluation of each program area is performed on a five-year cycle to ensure proper sequence and distribution of content among various courses. To facilitate curriculum and other improvement activities, the school district calendar provides six days when secondary schools open two hours later than usual for students.

The Lower Merion district's support for teachers' professional growth and development is generous and ongoing. Staff are encouraged to visit other schools, to attend professional conferences, and to report back at faculty meetings. The district and school also provide ongoing inservice. Recently, all teachers participated in a ten-session computer literacy course and inservice programs dealing with reading in the content areas, and the emotional and social development of the middle school child.

The level of teacher involvement at Welsh Valley was reflected by the high rating they received on such Educational Quality Assessment items as: "the ability of the staff to work together," and "teacher input into matters of curriculum and instruction."

Parent/Community Support

Parents of Welsh Valley students have high expectations for their children. They demand quality education. The school works to insure that parents are kept informed of general happenings within the school as well as the progress of their children. It maintains an open door policy, holds "coffee and conversation" sessions for teachers and parents, and has an annual all-school picnic which encourages families to meet teachers and enjoy leisure time together.

The Home and School Association is an active, positive force in the school. Association committees work on programs such as book fairs, assemblies, fine arts, hospitality, and human relations, publish a bi-monthly newsletter to parents; recruit volunteers from the business and cultural community to share their time, talents, and expertise with Welsh Valley students; and sit in on student council meetings.

Involved Students

Welsh Valley believes its high attendance record (97%) is a positive indicator that its students feel something important happens at school and want to be there. In addition, over 75% of the students take part in after-school co-curricular activities. These activities include concert choir, dramatics, and stage crew; newspaper and yearbook; weather station; brain games; science and pep clubs; and intramural and interscholastic sports in archery, basketball, flag football, field hockey, gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, softball, tennis, and volleyball.

The student government involves students in decision-making at Welsh Valley. The student council, composed of elected officers and representatives from the homerooms, holds monthly meetings planned and run by the students themselves. The council raises and distributes funds, plans school activities, and recognizes special student or faculty contributions to the school community. In addition, they raise funds for equipment and organize student volunteers to work at nearby Royer Greaves School for the Blind. The faculty and parent representatives to the council participate only if they are on the agenda.

The Future

Welsh Valley will continue to face the problem of maintaining the high quality of the programs despite declining enrollment. The administration feels it has made long-range plans which project ways to handle the decline and which will keep all of the school's programs at their current level.

For More Information Contact:
Welsh Valley Middle School
1320 Hagy's Ford Road
Narberth, PA 19072
215/664-3112

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WEST CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

"At our school you have to try harder...Rarely does a teacher apply for a job here if he is not a strong teacher and a solid professional. Neither the religious Brothers nor the members of the lay teachers union are knocking the doors down to get on our faculty. Many of them are afraid to come into our neighborhood. The teachers, who are here, are here because they like our students. They like the challenge that teaching in a city school presents." Principal

West Catholic High School for Boys is one of 29 Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. It serves 20 parishes in the neighborhoods of West Philadelphia. It has an enrollment of 1,070 boys in grades 9-12. Approximately 62% of the students are white, 33% black, 2% Hispanic, and 3% are Asian, including many recent Vietnamese immigrants. Approximately 25% of the boys come from low-income families and 17% receive financial aid for tuition.

Tuition at West Catholic supports 85% of the operating budget of the school. Catholic students pay over $1,000 tuition, while non-Catholics, over $1,200 tuition. Gifts from the school's parishes make up the difference. The Archdiocese provides support for major capital improvements like a new roof, new lighting system, renovated heating system, and computer equipment.

The average class size at West Catholic is 34. The faculty includes 39 teachers, four counselors, and two library/media specialists. The faculty is supported by two teacher aides, two school ministers, one security officer, five clerical staff, 10 food service workers, and five buildings and grounds personnel. There are four administrators. Thirty-two of the 39 teachers are lay, and are members of the Association of Catholic Teachers union. The principal and vice-principal are Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The School as "Oasis"

West Catholic is "an oasis" in an area of Philadelphia characterized by abandoned buildings, graffiti, and other signs of economic depression. Many of the students come to school with such serious personal problems that the staff must continually remind itself that West Catholic is a school and not a hospital. Even so, West Catholic has managed to retain a relaxed orderliness and an atmosphere which is both businesslike and caring.

West Catholic works very hard to help students cope with their very real problems. The staff works closely with parents and puts them in touch with social and medical agencies. However, except in the most dire circumstances, it also tries to insist that a student must do his school work while he is working out his problem, or in spite of his problem if it cannot be worked out.

Because West Catholic is a multi-racial school where all are welcomed and accepted, students from different backgrounds must learn how to deal with each other. The elementary schools which feed into West Catholic are generally all white or all black. The student council and the administration work together on an orientation program each fall which helps prepare incoming students for life in a multi-racial school.

Building Morale

During the 1960s and 70s, as the neighborhoods around it declined, West Catholic suffered a decline in morale. Students no longer felt "West is Best," and teachers were frustrated by the students' lack of academic success. The principal theorized that the teachers' low morale reinforced the students' view, and the students' low morale fed the teachers' frustrations.

To break this cycle, the principal worked first with the faculty. He believed the staff to be both skilled and dedicated and told them so. He supported them in conflicts with students and parents. Religious brothers were urged to treat lay teachers with great respect. The change in mood came quickly and was directed toward

improving the attitude of students. The slogan "West is Best" is back in style.

Strengthening the Program

West Catholic's curriculum is overseen by the Academic Council, composed of the chairpersons of all the departments, which meets monthly with the administration to review course offerings and the quality of instruction. Department chairpersons, in turn, meet with their departments monthly. The curriculum is offered in four tracks: honors, college preparatory, track 3, and remedial.

The remedial track, called Operation Individual (O.I.), is a two-year program for students who score below the 25th percentile on a standardized reading test. Approximately 40-50 ninth graders are enrolled each year. O.I. is highly structured, with specific learning goals for each lesson in religion, English, social studies, mathematics, and reading. Classes are small, 8-10 for reading, 20-25 for others. The reading teachers are specialists provided by the Philadelphia School District's Chapter 1 program. Each reading teacher also has a paraprofessional aide paid by the program. Students who still need remedial work in their junior year continue in small classes, but no longer receive instruction in reading. It is the school's expectation that all students move to track 3 or higher by their senior year.

To recruit and retain the brightest students in West Philadelphia, West Catholic established an honors program. Approximately 10% of its students are now enrolled in honors math and social studies. This program has significantly improved West Catholic's image as a good place for bright students to go.

Most recently, however, West Catholic has focused on track 3 students, previously the most troublesome in the school. Track 3 students score between the 26th and 60th percentiles on standardized tests and represent nearly half the student body. Track 3 teachers now meet on a regular basis with the administration to discuss the curriculum, and in-service sessions are devoted to sharing instructional techniques. These efforts have not yet produced miracles, but the teachers are approaching their job of motivating the students with greater enthusiasm.

Shared Vision, Unique Spirit

West Catholic seeks to provide an education derived from the vision and values of the best thinkers and artists of the world at large. It believes that such an education takes place in a spirited Christian school community in which adults and adolescents share attitudes of mutual respect, acceptance of individual differences, openness to the daily opportunities of learning from each other, and a commitment to striving together for excellence in all facets of school life.

Teachers at West Catholic exemplify this spirit. Many spend extra time with their students, tutoring or coaching them. No matter how much trouble a student gets into, there is always someone on the staff who knows him and who will act as his "lawyer" when the chips are down. Teachers encourage; they chide; they treat their students like their own sons.

In the course of a school year, the contract between the union and the Archdiocese is rarely referred to by either teachers or the administration. When teachers are asked to do something, they do not quibble about legalities. They trust the administration, and they want to do what they can to make West Catholic better. They do much more than the contract imposes without complaint and without remuneration.

The students respond to this spirit. They are motivated to good, not by fear of punishment, but by positive reinforcement. Older students work with younger students to help them learn that all people should be treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.

The school's spirit is reflected in its community service work. West Catholic led the 29 diocesan schools in a food drive, collecting over 21,000 canned goods, despite the fact that it is one of the smallest and poorest schools in the diocese. This spirit of compassion spills over into activities which are neither sponsored nor advertised by the school. For example, at least 40 West Catholic boys participated in a recent hand-in-hand day for the handicapped children at St. Joseph's University.

This spirit has been reinforced by the unique student retreat program which sends the boys to their own parishes and brings the parish priests to the school on occasion to minister to the boys. Through this effort, West Catholic tries to broaden the concept of Church.

The Future

West Catholic is proud of the school community it has built. It believes that it has made substantial progress in developing programs effective with both the brightest and the slowest students. It is now working hard to achieve similar success with the average student. It recognizes the continual challenge it faces given the lack of home and neighborhood support for serious academic learning. Nevertheless, the school's leadership and staff are committed to meeting that challenge. The school is characterized by ongoing improvement within the constraints of the limited resources it has.

For More Information Contact:
West Catholic High Schools for Boys
4909 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19139
215/472-2700

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